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Sports Pg 12

Leafs can't stop Florida

Council mulls subway line conditions

TRANSIT Toronto city council is expected to endorse a plan this month to extend the TTC's Yonge subway line by 6.8 kilometres into York Region. The TTC and executive committee have agreed to build the Metrolinx-backed project subject to conditions, including a major makeover of the Bloor-Yonge station, which could double the $2.4-billion projected cost to nearly $5 billion.

Some conditions the city has set for participating in the project include:

- The venture must not lead to additional capital or net operating costs for the city;
- The TTC must manage, deliver, operate, maintain and largely own the project;
- Funds must be provided for extra storage yards for TTC trains, and expanded capacity at Bloor-Yonge.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Metro Drive pg 15

BMW makes room for more fun

Travel pg 17

Spas are top destination

ShareYourViews
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Soldier **Murder charges**

TOM HANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Capt. Robert Semrau, left, arrives yesterday under military police custody for his hearing at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa. Semrau is charged with second-degree murder in the death of a presumed enemy fighter in Afghanistan. More coverage, page 6.

City shovels more into snow budget

New contract, bigger storms boost spending to $80M

Toronto's snow-clearing budget is ballooning to $80 million this year, in part because contract costs are rising and bigger storms are anticipated.

Last year, the city budgeted only $63 million but spent more than $85 million because of a near-record snowfall, said Gary Welsh, general manager of transportation.

"The public expectation is very high. We get limited complaints about main roads and expressways," he said. "It's the side streets — a lot of residents want snow cleared as soon as possible, almost to bare pavement."

"The public expectation is very high ... It's the side streets — a lot of residents want snow cleared as soon as possible, almost to bare pavement."
Gary Welsh, GM of transportation

The city's costs for contractors were lower last year because it was at the end of a five-year deal. This year, the city is starting a new seven-year contract.

Costs also increase when a lot of snow needs to be removed, and not just plowed, because of heavy storms and less melting. Officials are assessing whether plowing is needed across the city every time it snows, as snowfalls can be heavier in certain areas. Salters alone may do the job in some places.

"After amalgamation, it was all about equal service," Welsh said. But by being more selective after a storm, "we can save a couple hundred thousand dollars."

A bid by Coun. Glenn De Baeremaeker to require all able homeowners in the city to shovel their sidewalks was defeated 4-1.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gaza Strip ceasefire proposed

France and Egypt announced an initiative to stop the fighting in Gaza late yesterday, hours after Israeli mortar shells exploded near a UN school sheltering hundreds of people displaced by the onslaught on Hamas militants. At least 30 Palestinians died.

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner released no details of the ceasefire plan, saying at the UN Security Council the presidents of his country and Egypt were awaiting a response from Israel.

School

- Israel's military said its shelling at the school — the deadliest single episode since Israeli ground forces invaded Gaza on Saturday after a week of air bombardment — was a response to mortar fire from within the school and said Hamas militants were using civilians as cover.

Israeli officials in Jerusalem declined immediate comment on the announcement, which came amid diplomatic efforts by the United States and other countries to resolve a conflict between Israel and the Islamic militants of Hamas that has seen 600 people killed in 11 days.

U.S. president-elect Barack Obama broke his silence on the crisis yesterday, saying "the loss of civilian life in Gaza and in Israel is a source of deep concern for me." He declined to go further, reiterating his stance that the United States has only one president at a time.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
MORE COVERAGE, PG 6, 8

Watch an interview with Tony Blair and an eyewitness account from Gaza at metronews.ca/world

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Serial rapist released
A serial rapist kept behind bars for 13 years for a string of sexual assaults in Toronto in 1992 was released yesterday after finishing his full sentence. Orville Dwayne Thompson, 37, will live with family in Ajax under strict conditions, Durham police say. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

Stabbing at Mississauga school

A 17-year-old student is under arrest after another 17-year-old was stabbed with a pair of scissors at a Mississauga high school yesterday. Peel police responded to the stabbing call just before 1 p.m. at Rick Hansen Secondary School, on Dream Crest Road, in the Mavis Road and Eglinton Avenue West area, after an altercation broke out between two boys inside the school, said Peel Police Const. J.P. Valade. The victim, who was stabbed four times, is being treated in hospital. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

Comment
Andrew Cohen brings his controversial take on events at home and abroad.

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What's online today.

Video Nanotechnology creates smell-free socks and germ-free toilets at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Tim Hortons traffic snarls prompt St. John's drive-thru crackdown at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Jim Flaherty previews budget measures to boost the economy at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 6 7 0; **Ontario Pick 4** : 3 2 1 2.
Encore: 8308739
Daily Keno: 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 24, 27, 29, 39, 40, 42, 45, 52, 58, 59, 62, 63, 65 & 66.
These results are not official.

Coping with loss

Black fabric tied to the windowsills of Evelyn Alfaro Mendez's family home offers only a hint of the sadness inside.

In the family room of this modest Malton dwelling, Odalys Alfaro, the 12-year-old daughter of Toronto's second homicide victim this year, buries her head in her grandmother's shoulder. Her dimpled smile disappears as she struggles to grasp her mother's sudden, tragic death.

"I love you," Odalys said, as if sending a message to her 34-year-old mom. "I miss you. And I wish you'd never gone."

The last time Odalys, the second of three children, saw her mom was Sunday afternoon before bedtime.

She was sleeping when Alfaro Mendez, a regular on Toronto's nightclub circuit, and three cousins headed downtown.

On Sunday evening, Alfaro Mendez visited her boyfriend of four or five months, who lives in the Don Mills area, after dropping off her passengers in Toronto, relatives said yesterday. She was supposed to meet friends at a nightclub near Wilson Avenue. and Jane Street, but never arrived.

Police found her body just before midnight — apparently after a resident reported the idling vehicle. Other residents said they heard multiple gunshots around 9:30 p.m. and some had noticed another vehicle pull up, at some point, beside the silver SUV.

Police detectives — who still do not have a suspect, a murder weapon or a motive in the slaying — are scouring her personal life for leads. Alfaro Mendez did not have a criminal record. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TARA WALTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Family members of murdered 34-year-old Evelyn Alfaro Mendez cradle a photo of the victim in their Mississauga home yesterday.

Lotto officials alert public to false 'wins'

MONEY Ontario gaming officials spent much of yesterday apologizing after acknowledging a printing error created 1,100 false winning lottery tickets.

It is estimated that 50 to 150 of the defective $3 Fruit Smash scratch tickets were purchased, said Rula Sharkawi, executive director of communications at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.

"Near the end of a print run, there was a small batch of tickets that were misaligned at the printer," she said.

In Fruit Smash, players scratch an opaque layer at the top to reveal a fruit, then look to the game board section for possible matches and 'wins.'

But on the bogus cards, players looking to match up an apple would notice that under the latex, there would be, say, a banana, said Sharkawi. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Winners
- So far, 15 unlucky "winners" have contacted OLG offices.

Richard Brant case re-opened

CRIME The Ontario Court of Appeal is giving Richard Brant a second chance to prove he didn't kill his two-month-old baby, contrary to highly damaging findings made by disgraced pathologist Dr. Charles Smith.

Brant's deadline for appealing his 1995 conviction expired more than 13 years ago, but the court yesterday agreed to an extension. Lawyers for Brant, 36, have until Friday to file documents formally setting the appeal process in motion

Crown counsel Alison Wheeler has said they will not object to the delayed start to the process. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

CUPE A proposal by the president of the CUPE, the largest union in Ontario, to boycott Israeli academics at Ontario universities was labelled as anti-Semitic yesterday and called an affront to civil liberties by prominent members of Canada's Jewish community. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Halton cop arrested for assault

A Halton police officer is facing assault charges related to a November altercation with two citizens outside a Burlington bar. The officer, who was on duty at the time of the confrontation, was arrested yesterday after an investigation was sparked by a complaint. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

4,000 call for quick end to York strike

UNIONS When York University's student union held a press conference yesterday to present a petition calling for a quick end to the strike, two fat copies of the 4,000-name document sat ready; one for the union, the other for the university.

Strike

- The strike by the union began on Nov. 6, and if it continues much longer threatens to extend the school year.

The union rep arrived early; York sent no one to receive the petition.

"They know where our office is," said York spokesperson Alex Bilyk. A university official later fetched a copy.

In York's administration building, 20 students and striking teaching assistants remain camped outside the university president's office, hoping Mamdouh Shoukri will meet with them to host a forum about the strike.

Talks were expected to continue today between the university and the union representing 3,340 teaching assistants, contract faculty and graduate assistants.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

T.O. sewer 'failed'

City, fearing collapse, looks at solutions

According to engineers, the Coxwell Street Trunk Sewer, which carries the sewage of 750,000 Torontonians, has "failed."

A 60-metre section of the huge sewer, buried about 40 metres beneath Barbara Crescent, just north of Coxwell Avenue and O'Connor Drive, is cracked and chipping.

But Lou Di Gironimo, general manager of Toronto Water, says the big question remains unanswered.

"When will it collapse? Nobody can answer that question," Di Gironimo told the city's public works committee yesterday.

The cracks may be many years old. The only way to inspect the sewer is through robots with video and sonar instruments, he said.

"None of that can give us any structural integrity information ... No one can guarantee me how long it'll last. It could last decades. We don't know"

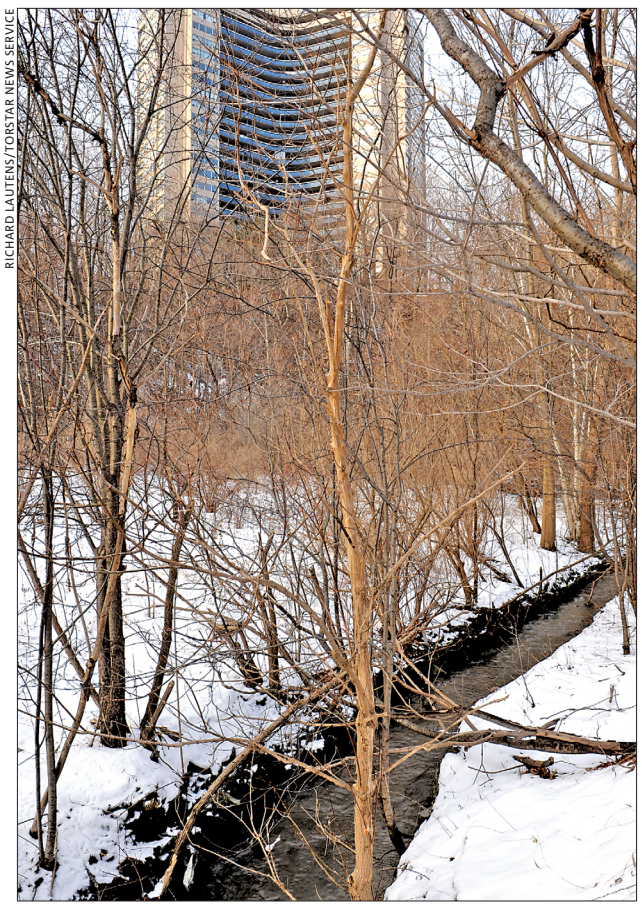
It will take 18 months and up to $30 million to build 600 metres of sewer to bypass the cracked part.

The good news is there's no sign yet the big sewer is leaking sewage outward, or collapsing inward.

Its flow — three times the volume of the Don River in dry weather — is unimpeded, carrying the waste from one-third of the city to the Ashbridge's Bay sewage treatment plant.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RICHARD LAUTENS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



This small stream drains from apartment buildings near the corner of Don Mills and Overlea and could become a river of effluence if problems persist.

Patient sues Toronto hospital over bacteria

MEDICAL A former patient is suing a Toronto hospital that published a study describing how sinks were responsible for the spread of a drug-resistant bacteria in its intensive care unit.

40 The amount in millions of dollars Ronald Sherman and his wife are asking for in damages from Toronto General Hospital and the University Health Network.

Researchers at the Toronto General Hospital found the location and design of sinks in the ICU led to the spread of Pseudomonas aeruginosa in the ward. The details of their discovery were outlined in this month's Journal of Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology. The bacteria was found in the sinks of TGH. The outbreak between December 2004 and March 2006, left 12 dead, and sickened two dozen others.

Ronald Sherman, 69, the plaintiff, was admitted to Toronto General in November 2005, with severe pneumonia, which worsened, according to the claim, when he became infected with pseudomonas at TGH.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

City politics a scary business

POLITICS Intimidation, accusations of dishonesty, and notices of slander and defamation aren't normally encountered in academia.

But dealing with these pressures is all in a day's work for Robert MacDermid, a York University political science professor who's made a name for himself challenging corporate donations to candidates in municipal election campaigns. MacDermid compiles data to learn which candidates get the most corporate contributions. He's published 10 papers on the subject.

He expects more threats after Toronto's executive committee agreed to draft a bylaw banning corporate and union campaign donations — a bylaw MacDermid argued would bring more transparency and hold candidates accountable to voters.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Crown calls Livent defence preposterous

THEATRE It is preposterous for Livent co-founders Garth Drabinsky and Myron Gottlieb to allege a wide-ranging conspiracy to frame them when the most logical explanation is they are fraudsters, prosecutors say.

Defence

- The defence will start final arguments today.

The defence claims that former Livent staff, the company's incoming U.S. owners, several lawyers and outside accountants colluded to pin the multimillion-dollar fraud on the accused, Crown prosecutor Amanda Rubaszek said in her closing arguments yesterday.

"There is a far more logical explanation and that is that the accused did it. They knew," Rubaszek said.

Drabinsky and Gottlieb have pleaded not guilty to fraud and forgery that allegedly occurred at the live theatre company from 1989-98. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Canadian among those killed in Thai nightclub fire

Foreign Affairs says a Canadian was among the revellers who perished in a New Year's Eve fire at a nightclub in Bangkok, Thailand. A spokesman in Ottawa said consular officials have been in contact with the family to offer assistance and support. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Faceoff over ethics rules

Lawyers for Brian Mulroney and Karlheinz Schreiber are squaring off today for their first real tussle at a public inquiry into the business dealings between the former prime minister and the German-Canadian arms dealer. At issue is the legal yardstick by which Mulroney's conduct should be measured — and, by implication, the question of whether he strayed beyond the bounds expected of a senior public official. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Soldier at hearing

Army captain charged with murder

A witness reported seeing Capt. Robert Semrau fire at a severely injured, unarmed Taliban fighter after an ambush in October, a military hearing was told yesterday at CFB Petawawa.

A synopsis of events introduced at the hearing and agreed upon by the military prosecution and defence lawyers provided the first detailed glimpse of the circumstances that led to the 35-year-old Canadian Armed Forces officer being charged with second-degree murder.

It was read at a hearing into whether Semrau should be released from custody until he stands trial. Military Judge Lt.-Col. Louis Vincent reserved his decision until today.

The prosecution believes Semrau killed the wounded insurgent without lawful justification. This is the first time a criminal charge has been laid against a Canadian solider in Afghanistan involving the death of an alleged enemy fighter.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Controversy

- The charge has provoked controversy because it was laid more than two months after the death of the Taliban fighter in Afghanistan's Helmand province on Oct. 19.

In court **Accused of faking death**

GARY KEAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bruce Leyte heads to provincial court in Corner Brook , N.L., yesterday on a charge of faking his own death. Leyte, 57, was arrested in November in St. John's more than two years after he disappeared in Corner Brook.

Canadians missed chance to leave Gaza

MIDEAST Thirty-nine Canadians, still stranded in war-wracked Gaza yesterday, could have safely departed the territory last Friday — if only Canadian diplomats had known it. Early last Friday, more than 200 foreign nationals fled Gaza via the Erez border crossing. Had the Canadians shown up at the border on Friday, they likely would have been permitted to cross, said Maj. Peter Lerner, spokesperson for the Israeli agency that handles the country's activities in the territory. But it was only on Friday that Canadian diplomats first provided the Israelis with a list of names of Canadians who wanted to leave the territory, and no attempt was made to contact them that day, to tell them to get to the border.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

CREDIT A new working group of bank and government officials is being asked to immediately begin looking at ways to make loans more accessible to Canadian consumers and business, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said. It was Flaherty's first comment on a meeting he and Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney held behind closed doors with bank CEOs in Toronto on Monday. The new group will be composed of representatives from the big banks, the finance department and the Bank of Canada, an aide to Flaherty said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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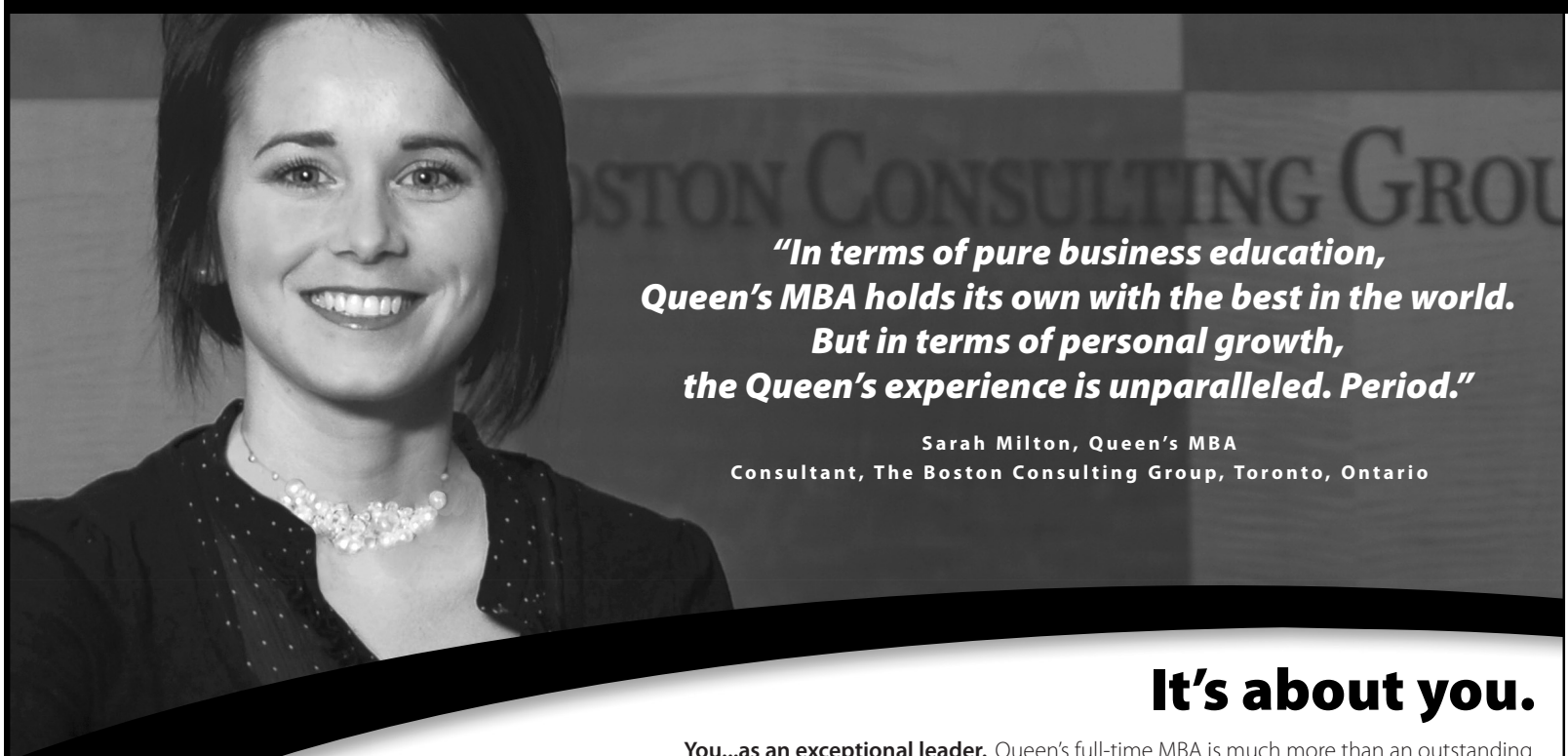

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Census trial delayed
A trial has been delayed for a Saskatchewan woman who refused to complete the 2006 Canadian census. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Tories kept in dark

Will provincial party leader stay or quit?

Progressive Conservative Leader John Tory is keeping his party guessing about his political future.

Asked yesterday whether Tory plans to remain at the PC helm, party president Ken Zeise said: "I don't know."

"I'm hoping he stays, yes, and I'm hoping that circumstances allow that," Zeise said.

Those in the 25-member PC caucus are also in the dark. "Who knows what he's going to do? He hasn't told us," confided a veteran Conservative MPP, who is loyal to the leader.

Tory, who has been without a seat in the legislature since losing Don Valley West in the Oct. 10, 2007, provincial election, has promised to disclose his plans on Friday. He said in an e-mail yesterday he would have nothing to say publicly until then.

Observers reading the tea leaves at Queen's Park say they expect Tory to remain with the party.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Plane crash **Daring rescue**

JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rescuers arrive on a snowmobile from a remote area where a plane crashed in Bukland, Que., yesterday. Two men were confirmed dead, while another man and a woman were taken to hospital with critical injuries following a daring air rescue.

St. John's turns heat on drive-thrus

MOTION The ubiquitous Tim Hortons drive-thru is brewing a controversy in Newfoundland and Labrador's capital city. City councillors in St. John's are cracking down on the establishment of new drive-thru restaurants and coffee shops amid concerns that traffic congestion is risking safety. They passed a motion Monday that requires businesses to prove that traffic won't spill onto public roads before they're allowed to set up a drive-thru. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

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Virgina boy, 6, injured driving himself to school

A six-year-old Virginia boy who missed his bus tried to drive to school in his family's sedan — and crashed. State police say the boy suffered only minor injuries and authorities drove him to school after he was evaluated at a local hospital. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Pelosi re-elected as U.S. Speaker

The woman who made history two years ago by becoming the first female Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives has been re-elected to that post. House colleagues yesterday chose Nancy Pelosi to continue as Speaker. Her fellow Democrats, with an expanded majority, elected her over Republican John Boehner on the first day of the 111th Congress. Pelosi received 255 votes to Boehner's 174. The announcement was met with a standing ovation. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Obama warns of big deficits

U.S. president-elect Barack Obama vowed yesterday to bar legislators' pet projects from his massive economic stimulus plan and to bring unprecedented accountability to federal spending.

Barack Obama

Even as he promised to fight waste and to make tough budgetary decisions, however, Obama warned the nation could face trillion-dollar deficits for years to come. Eight years ago, the federal budget ran a surplus, and the deficit on Sept. 30 was about $455 billion.

Two weeks before taking office, Obama said Americans will accept his proposed stimulus plan — expected to cost about $775 billion — only if they believe the money is being used wisely to boost the troubled economy and to make smart long-term investments in public projects.

A new website will allow taxpayers to track where money is being spent while also showing the administration's estimate of how the money is affecting individual communities and the economy overall.

Obama's inauguration date is Jan. 20.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Europe fearing spillover

GAZA Government officials and Jewish leaders are concerned the conflict in Gaza may spill over into violence in Europe, with attacks reported against Jews and synagogues in France, Sweden and Britain.

Assailants rammed a burning car into the gates of a synagogue in Toulouse, in southwest France, Monday night.

France has Western Europe's largest Jewish and Muslim communities and a history of anti-Semitic violence flaring when tensions in the Middle East are high.

A Jewish congregation in Helsingborg, in southern Sweden, was attacked Monday night and on Sunday slogans, including "murderers ... You broke the ceasefire," were daubed on Israel's embassy in Stockholm.

This graphic shows the developments in the Israel offensive.

In Denmark, a 27-year-old Dane born in Lebanon to Palestinian parents is alleged to have injured two young Israelis last week in a shooting. Belgium ordered police in Antwerp and Brussels to be on "increased state of alert" yesterday after recent pro-Palestinian protests ended in violence and arrests.

In Britain, the Community Security Trust, a Jewish defence group, said it had seen a rise in anti-Semitic incidents since the start of Israel's offensive against Gaza. The group said it recorded 20-25 incidents across the country in the past week — a sizable increase from two to three incidents usually reported.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Governor scandal plagues Congress

ILLINOIS The U.S. Congress is even more abundant with Democrats after 32 senators were sworn in yesterday, but the ceremonies were overshadowed by the political scandal surrounding efforts to fill U.S. president-elect Barack Obama's vacant Illinois Senate seat.

Burris

- Burris is the former Illinois attorney general.

Roland Burris, the man appointed to Obama's seat by disgraced Gov. Rod Blagojevich, staged a dramatic bit of political theatre at the Capitol Building just before the opening of Congress. The 71-year-old knew he'd be turned away. But he showed up anyway, effectively stealing the spotlight.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Jeb Bush won't seek U.S. Senate seat
Former Florida governor Jeb Bush says he won't run for the U.S. Senate in 2010 to replace the retiring Mel Martinez. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Website disclaimer

Oprah update talks about Holocaust story

Oprah Winfrey has yet to comment on Herman Rosenblat and his debunked story of meeting his future wife in a Nazi concentration camp. But a brief disclaimer has been added to her website, www.oprah.com, which still devotes substantial space to the Rosenblat romance.

Oprah Winfrey

"On Dec. 27, 2008, Herman Rosenblat admitted to fictionalizing portions of his life story, including how he met his wife," reads the update, which was posted on Monday. "Based on this admission, the publisher of his forthcoming memoir — Angel at the Fence — cancelled plans to print his book."

The update appears at the bottom of the first of three pages about Rosenblat, his wife, Roma, and their two appearances on Winfrey's television show. Winfrey spokeswoman Angela DePaul, when asked yesterday why Rosenblat's story — listed on the site as the first example of Love Lessons From Amazing Couples — wasn't removed, referred to the update posted by "the oprah.com editorial team" and declined further comment.

Rosenblat, 79, a resident of North Miami Beach, Fla., was a Holocaust survivor who for years had endeared himself to Winfrey and others by recalling how he and his wife met on opposite sides of a barbed-wire fence at a sub-camp of Buchenwald in the 1940s and were reunited more than a decade later on a blind date in New York. Berkley Books, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA), had planned to release his memoir in February.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

MINNESOTA Republican Norm Coleman filed a lawsuit yesterday, challenging Democrat Al Franken's apparent recount victory in Minnesota's U.S. Senate race, delaying a resolution of the contest for weeks or months. At a Capitol news conference filled with cheering supporters, Coleman said he won't accept a board's determination a day earlier that Franken captured 225 more votes in the November election. He had a seven-day window to file the lawsuit. "We are filing this contest to make absolutely sure every valid vote was counted and no one's was counted more than anyone else's," Coleman said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment & Views

Comment

Give banks some credit

Despite war of words, stats show loans are still flowing

MoneyMatters

Charles Davies
Veteran Business Writer

Even the Bank of Canada admitted in its December financial system review that "credit growth ... has generally been sustained throughout the crisis."

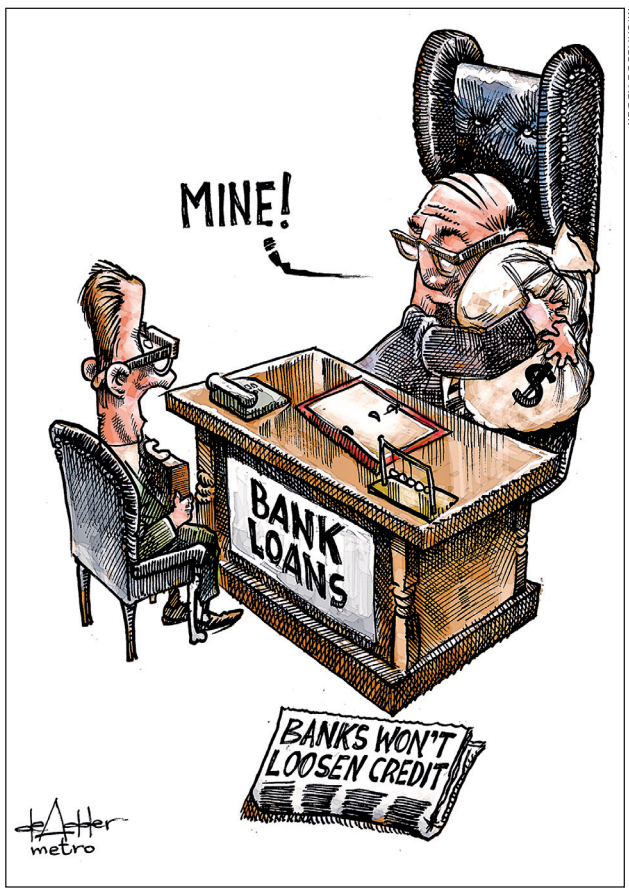
As a onetime inmate of the Canadian banking system, I can tell you from first-hand experience that bankers are prone to excesses and lapses in judgement. The bank I worked for — one of the Big Five — has long had an eerie proficiency at messing up, finding itself covered in goo after the bursting of every financial bubble in recent decades. Banks are also the institutions we love to hate. We may need them, but there's always that sense that, like the unreconstructed Scrooge, they are gouging us.

But are they turning us away in our hour of economic crisis? If you believe Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney, the banks are shutting off the lending taps just when we need credit most. The banks are charged with sopping up the liquidity that Ottawa and the Bank of Canada has provided to stimulate lending and using it to strengthen their own balance sheets. A war of words has been waged between the two sides since early December, and this week Flaherty and Carney called top bankers in for a meeting to apply direct pressure.

On the evidence, Flaherty and Carney don't have much of a case. Using the Bank of Canada's own statistics, Toronto Dominion Bank argued recently that loans have kept flowing through the crisis. From September to November, household credit was up more than 12 per cent year to year while business credit rose 13.4 per cent hardly suggesting a credit squeeze. It's also been noted that Canadian banks made up some of the difference as foreign banks and auto financing arms fled the market. Even the Bank of Canada admitted in its December financial system review that "credit growth ... has generally been sustained throughout the crisis."

Banks could be forgiven if they were a whole lot tighter. Ironically, Ottawa's bank regulator, the Office of Superintendent of Financial Institutions, has been signalling that it may raise regulatory capital requirements this year, a good reason to hoard cash. Besides, in a weak economy, banks normally become more scrupulous lenders and boost reserves because there's a greater likelihood of loan defaults. That's only prudent, given that the banks' first responsibility is to assure viable operations in order to protect depositors' funds. Staying healthy also helps preserve shareholder value which affects a majority of Canadians who, directly or indirectly, own bank stock. What's good for them is at least partly what's good for most of us.

Charles Davies is a veteran business writer and editor who has worked for news organizations and publications including Business Week, Canadian Business, Report On Business magazine, Reuters, and Financial Post.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Letters

Lives cut short in Gaza

The Israelis have been bombing the Gaza Strip continuously and at such a rapid rate that everyone is just in utter shock.

How can they even think about dropping bombs and missiles on these innocent people, especially the children?

These children still haven't had a chance to see anything in the world.

EMAN KADRI, CALGARY

Word on the street: What's your New Year's resolution — and have you already broken it?

Christine Armstrong
age 25, Toronto
A: Honestly, I never follow through, so I just don't make them anymore.

Chris Redcliffe
age 71, Scarborough
A: Going back into swimming. I already got my membership back in October, so I hope I can keep it.

Saul McFarland
age 37, Toronto
A: I'm 37 and I've never made a resolution. People should set their goals on a daily basis.

Michelle Richardson
age 36, Ajax
A: To save a heck of a lot more than I have in the past. I started over the holidays, putting a limit on each gift. I've stuck to that.

Thomas Ly
age 35, Toronto
A: Winning the 6/49! I bought my ticket, so I've done my part. I've got my fingers crossed.

Jen Galligan
age 43, Calgary
A: Mine is to hopefully drop 20 pounds. So far I'm stickin' to it. That's one resolution I can say I didn't break.

Zach Pipes
age 19, Calgary
A: I didn't really make any this year. I never went along with it for the last two years I made them... so what's the point?

Melodie Cardin
age 23, Ottawa
A: I haven't, but I expect to soon. My New Year's resolution was to wash the dishes right away after I eat. So far so good.

Rick Park
age 27, Halifax
A: I'm going to run a marathon. Today, I'm going to the gym with my friends — it's my fourth day at the gym.

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: torontoletters@metronews.ca
Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Natural gas shortages slam European nations
Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Croatia and Turkey reported a halt in gas shipments, and even France, Germany, Austria and Poland reported substantial drops in supplies as the Russia-Ukraine natural gas dispute hit Europe yesterday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Workers fear truck plant may close

NAVISTAR The sputtering Navistar truck plant in Chatham is cutting another 200 jobs and raising worker concerns that it could close altogether.

The reduction on March 1 will jack up the number of workers on layoff at the plant to more than 1,000 and has left union leaders questioning the plant's future now that there are fewer than 200 workers remaining. The plant has already laid off about 330 production and office workers. It plans to lay off another 489 on Jan. 31.

In 2002, Navistar indicated it would close the plant, but reversed the decision after union concessions and the federal and provincial governments provided $65 million in aid. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Market woes over?

No swift return to bullish days, analysts say

Despite a seemingly endless tide of bad economic news and forecasts, Canadian stocks experienced a sixth straight day of gains yesterday.

The recent rally on the TSX has raised the index 14 per cent from its pre-Christmas woes.

Having closed yesterday at 9,472.09 points, the market lows of November (when the TSX dropped to 7,724.76 points) seem to be fading into the past.

"We're certainly not out of it yet."
James Marple

But with war in the Middle East and the national economic outlook even grimmer today than three months ago, many remain wary of branding this recent rally as a return to the bullish days of yore.

"We're certainly not out of it yet," says James Marple, economic forecaster with TD Economics. "Things in Canada will get worse before they get better."

Oil prices, while up, remain volatile because of the conflict between Israel and Hamas and economists are forecasting another 22,000 jobs lost in the month following the sharp drop of 70,600 in November. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Cellphone users shy away from iPhones

Add the iPhone to the list of things that consumers are thinking twice about.

Rogers Communications yesterday reported figures for the fourth quarter that boasted an increase in net wireless subscribers to 199,000 from 183,000 a year earlier. But, as one analyst pointed out, Rogers' sales of about 130,000 high-end iPhones over the three-month period was a nearly 50 per cent drop in sales from the previous quarter, where 255,000 iPhones were sold.

Investors responded by pushing Rogers stock down nearly six per cent, or $2.19 cents, to $35 yesterday on the Toronto Stock Exchange. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Business in brief

MUSIC Apple Inc. is cutting the price of some songs in its iTunes online store to 69 cents US. It also disclosed that soon every track will be available without copy protection. iTunes songs will come in three pricing tiers: 69 cents US, 99 cents US and $1.29 US.

HOUSING The average price of a house in Canada is likely to decline by three per cent this year as sales activity continues to cool, according to Royal LePage Real Estate Services. The average house price is forecast to dip to $295,000, down from $304,000 in 2008, which was off from $307,265 in the peak year of 2007.

SUICIDE German billionaire Adolf Merckle threw himself in front of a train after his business empire, which included interests ranging from VW cars to pharmaceuticals to cement, ran into trouble in the global financial crisis. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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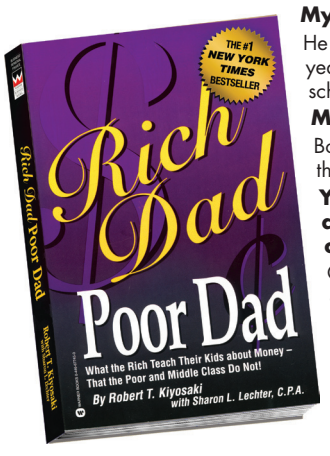

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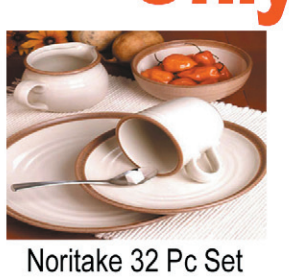
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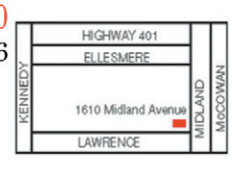

Brees named offensive player of year

New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees won The Associated Press 2008 NFL Offensive Player of the Year award yesterday. Brees threw for 5,069 yards and 34 touchdowns this season, coming up only 15 yards short of Dan Marino's all-time single season record for passing yardage. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Sports

Beckham makes AC debut

David Beckham made his AC Milan debut yesterday in a friendly against Hamburg SV in Dubai. Beckham has joined the Serie A club on short loan from the Los Angeles Galaxy to keep in shape and stay in contention for the England team during the MLS offseason.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Not as close as the score looks

NHL RESULT

Panthers 4 Maple Leafs 2

VS

The evening started with fans of the Toronto Maple Leafs booing former whipping boy Bryan McCabe. It wasn't long before those taunts were turned on the home team.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/FRANK GUNN

Mikhail Grabovski gets tripped up by Florida Panthers defenceman Jay Bouwmeester last night.

McCabe collected an assist in his return to the Air Canada Centre last night as the Florida Panthers hammered the Maple Leafs 4-2. Stephen Weiss, Ville Peltonen, Michael Frolik and Gregory Campbell had goals for Florida.

The Panthers got a quick jump on their opponents, registering 10 shots on goal in the first five minutes of the game before eventually building a 3-0 lead after two periods.

That prompted the crowd to boo the Maple Leafs at the second intermission. Leafs coach Ron Wilson did his best to help by pulling Vesa Toskala with two minutes to play. It was to no avail. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

NHL Once bitten?

AP PHOTO/JEAN DUPREY

Andrew Peters of the Sabres reacts after allegedly being bitten by the Senators' Jarkko Ruutu last night. Peters said after the game that he was bitten, which Ruutu denied. Buffalo won 4-2.

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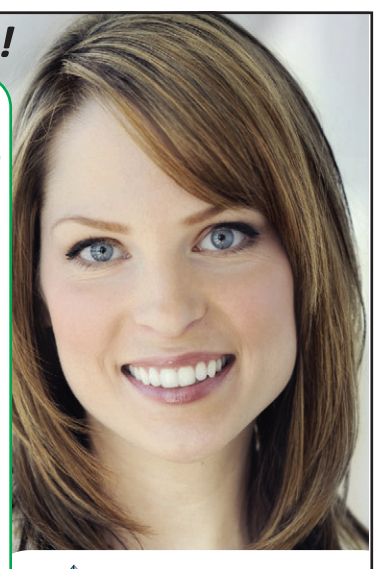

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Steelers defence tops, offence a worry

The Pittsburgh Steelers are committing the most turnovers of any team left in the NFL playoffs, getting sacked more often and are scoring the fewest points.

As good as their No. 1-ranked defence is, the offence is an ongoing worry to coach Mike Tomlin, as the Steelers prepare to play the San Diego Chargers in an AFC divisional playoff game Sunday.

Even if he won't say so.

"There's no hocus-pocus or secret formula for getting the ball in the end zone," Tomlin said yesterday, a day off for his players. "We've got to execute better."

Ben Roethlisberger has been cleared to play after suffering a concussion in the regular season finale.

Part of the problem is a falloff in a traditionally strong running game that, with Willie Parker hurt part of the season, ranked only 23rd. Ben Roethlisberger's inconsistency also is a concern. A year after throwing 32 touchdown passes and 11 interceptions, Roethlisberger has 17 TD passes and 15 interceptions.

"We can drive up and down the field, but we have to be able to put the ball in," Roethlisberger said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Charger trouble

- San Diego Chargers receiver Vincent Jackson was arrested yesterday on suspicion of drunken driving.

Sports in brief

NHL Whether Mats Sundin makes his first NHL appearance as a Vancouver Canuck in Edmonton tonight will depend on how he feels today. "If nothing changes (Wednesday) morning, there's a good chance I'll play," Sundin said yesterday.

Sundin

NBA The Denver Nuggets' Carmelo Anthony will miss at least three weeks after breaking a bone in his shooting hand in a victory over the Indiana Pacers on Monday. "Hopefully the healing process will be a lot quicker," Anthony said after visiting with a hand specialist. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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Romero, Mitre get big suspensions
Philadelphia Phillies reliever J.C. Romero and Yankees minor-league pitcher Sergio Mitre were suspended for the first 50 games of next season yesterday after testing positive for a banned substance. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Economy putting fear into NBA

And TSN2-Rogers issue not helping Canadian NBA fans

YorkReport

Marty York

marty.york@metronews.ca

Quietly, but surely, NBA clubs have been discounting seats for their games in recent weeks.

It's a delicate, unprecedented strategy — created, of course, by the economic crisis — and it's become commonplace throughout the NBA, including Canada, where the Toronto Raptors are suffering through a lamentable losing season.

Despite the discounts, attendance figures throughout the NBA are plummeting. Empty seats are sometimes outnumbering those with kiesters in them. And NBA executives are so concerned, sources tell Metro, they've called an emergency meeting, to be held in Phoenix next week.

NBA commissioner David Stern has issued a gag order on the meeting but a league exec told Metro: "There's a fear that our fans can't afford or won't keep paying what they've paid in the past for tickets. So next week's meeting is critical."

Best guess: The NBA soon will announce a decrease in ticket prices across the board.

• The NBA's problems here are unquestionably complicated by the fact that some of the Raptors' games are carried on TSN2, which is not available on the country's — and Toronto's — largest cable carrier. Rogers is depriving Canadian basketball fans by excluding TSN2 from its menu, and industry sources suspect its motive is at least partly attributed to its desire to see less competition for its own all-sports network, Rogers Sportsnet.

Whatever, it's a sad and silly situation. Last Friday, TSN2 drew a mere 18,000 viewers for a Raptors-Houston Rockets game.

That's pathetic, considering that many Raps games on the main TSN network attract audiences of around 200,000.

• Speaking of Houston, ex-Raps star Tracy McGrady is upsetting Rick Adelman these days. The Rockets' coach suspects the 6-foot-8 guard has been dogging it on occasion. "Tracy's been very unaggressive at times," Adelman said. "He can't keep playing like this or we just won't be any good."

• The CFL's first major surprise of the year has come in the first week of the year.

Toronto native Mike Benevides — despite receiving a multi-year head coaching offer that sources figured he would gladly accept from the beleaguered Argonauts — has elected to stay on as the B.C. Lions' defensive co-ordinator. "Can't figure it out," an Argos source said yesterday. "The guy (Benevides) all but officially signed. We're puzzled. Are we this undesirable?"

• CFLers such as B.C. defensive lineman Cameron Wake, Edmonton Eskimos offensive lineman Patrick Kabongo and Calgary Stampeders long snapper Pat MacDonald have been impressing NFL types during recent workouts and may be close to bolting to the bigger and better-paying league.

And Greg Marshall has jumped from his longtime position as defensive co-ordinator of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers to become the Hamilton Tiger-Cats' defensive co-ordinator.

Marty York has been a groundbreaking sports columnist and broadcaster in Canada for decades.

Camby to NY?

• NBA sources tell Metro sports columnist Marty York that a three-way trade could be imminent, with ex-Raptor Marcus Camby returning to the New York Knicks from the Los Angeles Clippers and the Knicks sending forward David Lee to the Portland Trail Blazers.

ULEB Sports, politics meet again

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO

Players for Israel's Bnei Hasharon basketball team flee the court yesterday before a ULEB Eurocup game against Turk Telekom in Ankara, Turkey. The game was postponed as hundreds of shoe-throwing fans protested the violence in Gaza.

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Florida 4 **TORONTO** 2
Buffalo 4 Ottawa 2
Carolina 3 New Jersey 2
Detroit 3 Columbus 0
Minnesota 1 Boston 0
Pittsburgh 3 Atlanta 1
Washington 2 Philadelphia 1 (SO)
Colorado at Nashville
San Jose at Calgary
Chicago at Phoenix
Los Angeles at Anaheim

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Charlotte 114 Boston 106 (OT)
Orlando 89 Washington 80
Philadelphia 104 Houston 96
Minnesota at Memphis
New York at Oklahoma City
Sacramento at Chicago
L.A. Clippers at Dallas
New Orleans at L.A. Lakers

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The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, in affiliation with the University of Toronto, is looking for volunteers for a study of light therapy and negative ions in the treatment of seasonal depression (also called seasonal affective disorder).

The study involves completing questionnaires and having 4 weeks of treatment with either a light therapy or negative ion generator device.

Eligibility:
- Male or female from 18 to 65
- Suffering from seasonal depression (seasonal affective disorder)
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- Are not currently abusing substances
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#Limited time lease offers based on new 2009 Honda models. Lease example based on 2009 Civic Sedan DX, model FA1529EX available through Honda Financial Services on approved credit. £1.9% lease APR for 48 months. Monthly payment is $178 with $2,349.45 down payment or equivalent trade, $1,310 freight and PDI, first monthly payment and $0 security deposit due at lease inception. Total lease obligation is $12,286.10. Taxes, license, insurance and registration are extra. 96,000 kilometre allowance; charge of $0.12/km for excess kilometres. Retailer may lease for less. Retailer order / trade may be necessary. ‡MSRP is $26,490 for a new 2009 Element LX, model YH1839E. $1,560 freight and PDI, license, insurance, registration and taxes are extra. MSRP of 2009 Element SC, model YH1899E shown is $31,190. Retailer may sell for less. Retailer order / trade may be necessary. ¥Cash purchase incentive offers will vary from model to model. $8,000 cash purchase incentive available on new 2009 Element LX 2WD, model YH1839E / 2009 Element SC 2WD, model YH1899E / 2009 Element EX 4WD, model YH2879EX. #/£/¥Offers valid from January 3rd, 2009 through January 31st, 2009 at participating Honda retailers. Offers subject to change or cancellation without notice. See your Honda retailer for full details. NHL and the NHL shield are registered trademarks of the National Hockey League. ©NHL 2008. All rights reserved.

Metro Drive

New Cadillac at auto show

General Motors announced this week that the 2010 Cadillac SRX will go on display at the 2009 North American International Auto Show in Detroit later this month. The foundering firm is hoping the car's new design and improved features will help it better compete with other luxury rivals.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

BMW's small wonder

Compact sports coupe makes room for more fun

JIM KERR
for Metro Canada

BMW's 135i coupe may be its smallest model but the features are anything but pint-sized.

BMW's 1-series is a compact 2+2 sports car available in both coupe and cabriolet form. This is the smallest BMW but great things can come in small packages and the 1-series certainly fits that description.

Two models are offered. Both the 128i and the 135i come with a 3.0-litre 24-valve DOHC inline six cylinder engine, but the 135i gets a little boost in horsepower with the addition of twin turbochargers and an intercooler. I took a 135i coupe out for a drive to experience the power and came back smiling about the complete package.

Outside, the 135i has BMW's traditional twin kidney shaped grille but in a smaller form, putting more emphasis on the large air intakes across the bottom of the front facia. A sharp bodyline starts at the headlights between the junction of the hood and the front fender and runs straight back the length of the body separating the car's greenhouse area from the lower body.

A chrome strip runs above the frameless door glass and rear side glass, highlighting the coupe's roofline. Black trim on the B-pillar provides the illusion of a longer side glass, but when viewed directly from the side, the short rear window and trunk lid are obvious. A rear spoiler is integrated into the trunk lid design.

Inside, front seat room is great but rear seat and headroom are limited. The front bucket seats slide forward for rear seat access, but entry is best left for agile friends. Our coupe came with the optional sport bucket seats. This $800 option gives 12-way adjustment to both front buckets, with manual control of height, tilt, fore/aft, recline and thigh support. Power side bolsters allow the seat sides to adjust to the driver's profile.

A cup holder is attached to the passenger side of the console. Although it may work well, this is the most ridiculous cup holder I have ever seen and it would be the first thing I would have removed from the car.

The dash gauges are large and round while the rest of the dash is conservative and uncluttered. A navigation system with idrive control is optional. The important features for the driver are the start button on the dash and the six-speed shifter between the seats.

'09 BMW 135i Coupe

Type: Compact sports car
Price: $41,700 MSRP
Engine: 3.0L twin turbo inline 6 cylinder
HP: 300 hp @ 5,800 rpm

Highlights

- Sport seats
- Automatic dual zone climate control
- Stability control
- Tilt/telescopic steering

The six-cylinder twin-turbo engine comes to life with a muted rumble and gets the adrenaline flowing. Maximum torque starts at only 1,400 rpm, so the car pulls smoothly away from a stop sign and doesn't tire you out in stop-and-go driving. Step firmly on the gas pedal and the engine feels like it would pull strong forever. Stability control and traction control help keep the rear 245/35R18 inch rubber under control.

Inside, the dash gauges are large and round while the rest of the dash is conservative and uncluttered.

This is a performance car with 300 horsepower in a 1,530 kg body and has brakes to match the power. It is nimble on corners and feels effortless to drive even when pushing it hard. It is also surprisingly economical on fuel, which is good because it likes to sip premium grade. The direct fuel injection and variable cam timing enable 7.9 litres/100 km on the highway.

A six-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters is available for drivers that don't want to shift the manual gearbox, but I found the manual shifter excellent and the clutch has a nice progressive engagement.

Introduced in Canada in 2008, the 1-series BMW has been sold in Europe since 2004. It's a shame we didn't get it here sooner because it is so much fun to drive.

Hyundai goes easy on buyers

PROGRAM Can't make the payments on that new car you just bought? No problem — just return it free of charge.

At least that's the deal being offered in the United States by Hyundai Motor America.

In a bid to woo skittish consumers, the South Korea-based automaker will cover the depreciation on a returned leased or financed vehicle for those who find themselves unable to make their car payments.

Deadbeats need not apply, however. The "Hyundai Assurance Program" only applies to customers stricken by misfortune outside of their control, such as losing their job, becoming disabled or losing their drivers licence for medical reasons.

Customers must also have made at least two payments on the car already.

In addition, Hyundai will only refund the depreciation on the returned car up to $7,500 US and the program is complementary for the first 12 months of leasing or financing.

Hyundai, which launched the program last week, said the program is aimed at consumers too nervous to spring for a new car in the difficult economy.

"Today we're extending ... peace of mind to cover consumers' employment status and personal finances," said John Krafcik, acting president and chief executive of Hyundai North America, in a prepared statement.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Makes sense to plug in

AutoPilot

Michael Goetz

Veteran auto journalist

"(GM's Larry Murphy) believes that the automotive DNA is about to change, to one based around electrical drivetrains, and to one also based on the notion that vehicles will be connected to each other on a grid."

I recently completed my first test drive in an all-electric vehicle.

I have no idea how many kilometres were possible with a full charge, because half way through my test the salesman took the keys away. He also said if I ever came back to Toys "R" Us, and got on that pink Barbie Escalade again, he would call security.

I wish this guy had spoken with Larry Murphy, as I had. Then he might have better understood my desire to experience the electrical movement. Murphy is best described as GM's future strategist. His job is to predict what personal transportation will look like in the future and how GM might position itself in that future. (I know, I know, GM and the future aren't entirely a done deal, but that's a business story, this is more of a technical one.)

He noted that the DNA of the automobile hasn't changed much in 100 years. Internal combustion engine. Fuelled by some kind of petroleum product. Lots of on-board mechanical and hydraulic systems. This type of vehicle also operates independently of other vehicles — you have to pay attention to the car and to the traffic.

"A relatively dumb machine," says Murphy.

He believes that the automotive DNA is about to change, to one based around electrical drivetrains, and to one also based on the notion that vehicles will be connected to each other on a grid. (Murphy considers fuel-cell technology a branch of electrical; fuel cells convert hydrogen to water and electricity.)

Not everyone agrees with Murphy, but the arguments for shaping cars around this model are compelling, even if you go beyond the obvious one of sustainable and clean energy consumption.

- Electric motors are small and do not need transmissions. This reduces weight and complexity. This also means less maintenance, not more.
- Electric cars have less inherent design constraints. Designers will be free to re-think what vehicle shapes are possible, and where to put people and their cargo.
- Electric cars can go really fast.
- Once connected to a grid so that congestion is relieved and cars don't crash into each other any more, then you can take even more mass out of the car — because you won't need all the on-board safety systems we need today.
- If all the above works as advertised, and safety and environment issues are under control, then the "automakers" will be able to concentrate more on the fun side of personal transportation. He figures they could eventually operate more like the fashion industry, and bring out fashionable exteriors and interiors almost on a seasonable basis.

Before we get there, there are a few technology bits to work out. Battery technology, for example, is acting like that four-year-old kid that refuses to keep up with the group. But he'll come along, surely. And when he does, I'm sure we'll all be singing our happy little electric song.

Michael Goetz has been writing about cars and editing automotive publications for more than 20 years. He lives in Toronto with his family and a neglected 1967 Jaguar E-type.

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thesmart.ca

MTO 0107

The second-generation Toyota Matrix brings back all-wheel drive for 2009. The sporty XRS model, shown above, features a 2.4-litre four-cylinder engine with 158 hp.

AWD returns in 2009 Toyota Matrix

LORNE DRURY
for Metro Canada

The Cambridge Ont.-built Toyota Matrix begins its second generation in 2009 with the return of the all-wheel drive (AWD) option.

The original Matrix, a hatchback (or crossover as Toyota refers to it) version of the Corolla model, was introduced in February 2002 as a 2003 vehicle.

It became an instant success in North America and last year sold 21,369 units in Canada, making it one of the country's top sellers.

In addition to the reintroduction of the AWD option (it was dropped in 2007), the 2009 model also brings back the sporty XRS model.

The new generation has a lower stance than the previous model, but not at the expense of interior space. Inside, many changes have been made including redesigned seats for added comfort, the introduction of a three-spoke tilt/telescopic steering wheel and a new console design.

Similar to the Corolla, engine choices are the 1.8-litre and the 2.4-litre four-cylinder powerplants. Standard is a four-speed manual with an available four-speed automatic.

The XR and XRS offer the five-speed manual or an available five-speed automatic, while the AWD comes only with a four-speed automatic.

The AWD system is the same as the one in the RAV4 and works on-demand. When slippage is detected on the front wheels, up to 45 per cent of the torque can be transferred to the rear wheels to ensure smooth performance.

This was driven home during a short "drag race" demonstration on sand and icy pavement against a front-wheel drive model. The AWD model consistently came out ahead and the absence of wheel spin was noticeable.

The Matrix has a MacPherson strut front suspension with a torsion-beam at the rear on all but the AWD and XRS. For these two models, a double wishbone suspension is offered. All models have four-wheel disc brakes with an anti-lock braking system (ABS), electronic brake-force distribution (EBD) and brake assist (BA). Vehicle stability control and traction control are available on the XR and standard on the XRS.

Four trim levels are offered: base, XR, AWD and XRS.

All models come with six air bags plus an all-new active headrest system for front seat passengers. In the event of a rear impact, the active headrests move up and forward to better support the head and prevent whiplash injury.

During a short time behind the wheel of a base Matrix and the sporty XR model, I found them to be comfortable, quiet and pleasant to drive.

I love hatchbacks and thus the Matrix wins my vote over the Corolla. It has sportier looks and driving dynamics and this is a model that is likely to pick up some of the younger customers Toyota is aiming for with its redesign.

carguidemagazine.com

For the latest road tests, vehicle evaluations and more, visit: carguidemagazine.com

carguide magazine.com

Kamikaze skating
Red Bull Crashed Ice — the annual event that combines elements of hockey, boardercross and downhill skiing — will take place Jan. 24 in Quebec City, as skaters race four at a time on a 550-metre ice track winding through the old city; redbullcrashedice.ca. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Travel

Shaky future

The news that Waterford Wedgwood PLC, the makers of crystal and china, filed for bankruptcy protection this week leaves not only the future of employees and several venerable brands up in the air, but also the viability of one of Ireland's top tourist attractions. Visitors flocked to the firm's crystal plant in Waterford, southeast Ireland, to watch glassblowers and other master craftsmen ply their trade; waterfordvisitorcentre.com. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

TRAVELDESK@METRONEWS.CA

Retreat, relax and rejuvenate

Whatever your taste in spas, here are top destinations to visit this year

EMMA E. FORREST
Metro World News

Left, the exterior of The Grove in Hertfordshire, England. Right, the infinity pool at Strawberry Hill, Jamaica offers a panoramic view.

The new year is the time to for relaxation and restoration, and a spa visit offers a shortcut to a new you. The following are four top destination spas to consider visiting in 2009:

Exotic
Strawberry Hill, Jamaica

Where: This retreat is nested in the lush rainforest of the Blue Mountains, with a panoramic view over the capital, Kingston.

The hotel: The former home of Island Records founder Chris Blackwell is a haven of tranquillity and a shrine to his musical protégées, from Bob Marley to U2. There are just 12 airy white cottages tucked into the botanical gardens of the estate.

The colonial-style main house serves as lounge, cinema and restaurant where you'll feast on mouth-watering home-made muffins in the morning, jerk chicken at the buffet lunch and shrimp and snapper at a smart dinner.

The spa: The Blue Mountains with their pure, clean air, is where the healthy-living, spiritual Rastafarians come to live. Visit Strawberry Hill for a complete retreat and the Caribbean's only full-service Aveda Concept Spa, which takes a holistic approach to wellbeing.

Lie back for a massage and you'll be lulled by the usual sounds of a spa — birdsong, crickets chirruping and soothing whisper of tropical rain — but this time for real rather than on a CD.

Getting there: BA and Virgin Atlantic fly to Kingston Airport. Strawberry Hill is 50 minutes by taxi.

Online: strawberryhillresort.com

Luxury
The Grove, England

Where: In Hertfordshire, just half an hour north-west of London, but once on this majestic historical estate, you feel like you're in the middle of the English countryside.

The hotel: This flawless hotel is a favourite with UK premiership footballers and exhausted high-fliers, and a break here is worth the investment. The Grove is so artfully conceived that it feels like a boutique hotel despite its 227 rooms.

There's tons to do here, from golfing on the championship course, cycling or walking through the hotel's 300-acre parkland, tennis, swimming indoors and out, idling in the elegant drawing rooms, relaxing in the spa.

For dining, choose your ambience, from the lively upmarket all-you-can-eat of the Glasshouse to the romantic fine dining at Colette's.

The spa: The award-winning luxurious Sequoia Spa offers steam rooms and a sauna.

Getting there: The train takes 20 minutes from London's Euston station to Watford Junction, then it's a 15-minute taxi ride.

Online: thegrove.co.uk

Weight loss
Mayr Clinic, Austria

Where: On the shore of the pretty Lake Worth, in the Austrian Alps.

The hotel: luxury is sacrificed to efficiency at this medical spa. Your usual holiday diet of three slap-up meals a day is replaced by herbal teas and stale spelt bread, chewed 50 times. At least the views are nice.

The Spa: the Mayr Clinic is a serious medical spa that gets results. Come for a detox here and your doctor will assess your goals and see you achieve them through a strict diet, and medical treatments including blood tests, detox massages and baths, reflexology and allergy testing.

Detoxing is tiring, so you'll need plenty of rest — you'll nap throughout the day and bedtime is 9 p.m. Hardly rock and roll but the results are that you'll feel like a rejuvenated, cleansed and healthier person.

Getting there: Staff will collect you from the nearest airport at Klagenfurt, or the train stations at Klagenfurt and Velden.

Online: mayrandmore.at

Budget
Hotel Gellert, Hungary

Where: This stunning art nouveau spa is right in the centre of Budapest, the capital of Hungary.

The hotel: Built in 1918 as a spa resort, the lavish building is a tourist destination in itself.

The spa: Budapest is right at the centre of the European continent and at the cross of a multitude of different geological areas, so the waters in Hungary benefits from many types of minerals.

The waters channelled into this majestic old-fashioned spa offer different temperatures and different healing minerals including sodium, calcium, magnesium and sulphates in its 13 pools, to resolve medical disorders including arthritis, back pain, and circulation.

Down in the changing rooms, serious ladies who pummel your back leave you with better results than your average luxury spa therapist. Outside there are sun decks, swimming pools and wave pools, as well as separate roof terraces for women and naturist sunbathers.

Getting there: Gellert is a 15 minute taxi ride from Keleti East Railway Station, or 40 minutes from Budapest International Airport.

Online: danubiushotels.com/gellert

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Top tubing spots

Among the top places to go snow tubing in Canada, according to Travelocity, are Mont Avila, Que., Horseshoe Valley Resort near Barrie, Ont., Mt. Seymour near Vancouver, and Mont Farlagne in New Brunswick. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MICHELLE THIBODEAU

Ice fishing huts sit on the ice of Lake Nipissing, Ont.

It's time for beer, fish and freezing cold

Every year, on New Year's Day, thousands of men toting only the bare essentials — a sleeping bag, fishing rod and booze — trek to Northern Ontario for a ritual they wouldn't miss if hell froze over.

In fact, they're counting on freezing temperatures: Ice fishing season is open.

Derek Young, who calls -8 C weather "comfortable" and -15 C "very nice," has been doing it since he was five years old.

"Once you get used to the cold weather, it's not bad at all," says the 39-year-old. "We're used to -30 C and we're out there doing our stuff just the same. It's never too cold."

These days, he and his wife Diane welcome the hordes to their idyllic swatch just off the south shore of Lake Nipissing, about a four-hour drive north of Toronto, with their business Lake Nipissing Ice Fishing Charters.

Groups are invited to settle in for a day, or several, in the cosy, colourful aluminum and wooden huts that have become the trademark of the Canadian pastime.

Add the Youngs' 11 huts to some 2,000 vibrant shacks erected on the lake's ice-covered surface in peak season and a veritable village rises almost overnight. It won't be disassembled until March.

"Men get so excited about ice fishing, it's not funny," says Michelle Thibodeau, who operates Idle Tyme Fishing Camp with her husband Warren. "They're in very good moods, they're up, they're normally all ready to go at 7 a.m. — even if they've been out drinking all night."

Scores of ice fishing entrepreneurs own facilities on Lake Nipissing, the fifth-largest lake in Ontario — excluding the Great Lakes — that's known for superior sunsets on its south shore and at least 16 species of healthy fish. A prized catch among anglers is the golden-coloured pickerel — commonly called walleye in those waters.

"It's just the best tasting fish that I think you're ever gonna taste out of fresh water," Young says.

Tourists can rent cottages on land and then be whisked by sleigh or snowmobile to the shacks, as offered by Idle Tyme, or opt to actually sleep on the lake inside fully equipped bunkers, such as those offered by the Youngs.

Operators use picks or ice augers to drill holes that match those inside the shacks and often supply minnows as bait. Then it's up to the fishers to take a seat, drop their line and wait for a bite.

"Generally, most fishermen are happy-go-lucky people," says Warren Thibodeau, who notes a male to female ratio of about 9:1, mainly because women say they don't enjoy the cold.

"They're happy to be out there, they're happy to be away for the weekend. It's a get-together for the guys. It's bonding time."

When tourists aren't hunkering down with any particular company, it's highly recommended they check ice safety with the locals before setting up shop. A general rule of thumb is that ice must be at least 20 centimetres thick to erect a shack and 30 centimetres thick to drive on.

Other essentials include obtaining a fishing licence and wearing warm, loose-fitting clothes, quality winter apparel and several pairs of mitts.

With drinking such a big part of ice fishing culture, Ontario Provincial Police frequently patrol the lake to ensure there's no drunk driving. Tourists who spend the night in their shacks, or are transported there by hosts, help ensure the merriment stays legal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

On the web

- lakenipissingicefishingcharters.net
- lake-nipissing-fishing.com
- waltonian-inn.com/fish-ice.htm

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rideau Hall rink is now open to visitors

OTTAWA Visitors to Ottawa may wish to pack their skates. Gov. Gen. Michaelle Jean and her spouse,Jean-Daniel Lafond, announced this week that Rideau Hall's historic skating rink is now officially open to visitors.

Skating on the grounds has been associated with the official residence since the 1870s, when Lord Dufferin was governor general. The rink will ordinarily be open to the public for skating on Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. but it's wise to check first, because official events or weather conditions may alter the schedule. Organized groups of 15 to 50 need to make reservations. More information is available at 613-991-4422. But leave the hockey sticks and pucks at home. The rink is exclusively for pleasure skaters.

Meanwhile, the National Capital Commission officially launched the 39th season of skating on the Rideau Canal on New Year's Day. The commission's ice safety committee says the two-kilometre stretch of ice between Pretoria Bridge and Bank Street Bridge, with the exception of a rest area at Patterson Creek, has reached the required ice thickness. Pedestrians and skaters are asked not to venture onto sections which remain closed, said a statement this week on the website; canadascapital.gc.ca. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ontario outings

/IMAGEONTARIO.COM

Enjoy cross-country skiing and other winter pursuits in Algonquin Park.

Winter adventure

- Get away from the city and spend a few days up in Algonquin Park, skiing across frozen lakes and snowshoeing through waist-deep snow. If you're looking for something new, learn how to backcountry ski or dogsled. When the day's done, relax in a nice wood-fire sauna and retreat to the log cabin you'll stay in for three days and two nights. Call 416-486-3605 for details.

Animal exploration

- Learn about how animals live in their natural environment at the Muskoka Wildlife Centre at Severn Bridge, north of Orillia, Ont. Explore both indoor facilities and 50 acres of scenic walking trails. Don't forget to catch the Meet the Creature presentations or take a stop at the gift and snack shop. Hours are from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends. To lean more, call 705-689-0222.

Snowmobile weekend

- Learn to love winter by signing up for a weekend of snowmobiling. At the Norsemen Restaurant & Walker Lake Resort, you'll find both privacy and great views — and after a day of snowmobiling on Muskoka's trails you can head inside for a fine meal and then kick back in a Jacuzzi tub; visit norsemen-walkerlake.com.

Funny stuff

- At the Stephen Leacock Museum in Orillia, Ont., you can take a guided tour of the house where the renowned author, humourist and academic spent most of his creative time. Enjoy story time with tea and cookies. The museum is open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; visit leacockmuseum.com.

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Visit **DisneyGiftCard.com** for more information about the Disney Gift Card program.

CST# 1022229-50; NVST# 2006-0198 ©Disney C8519097

New York hotel deal
Nine luxury hotels in New York City are offering a third night's stay free after you book and pay for two consecutive nights between Jan. 9 and Feb. 27. Details of the program are at nycgo.com/thirdnight. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Budget destination: Iceland

Suddenly, the country has become a red-hot tourist draw

ROMINA McGUINNESS
Metro World News

Iceland, a country once famous for its remote and magical landscapes — and for being one of the costliest countries in Europe — has undergone an unexpected twist of fate.

The combined effect of the global credit crunch and Iceland's official state of bankruptcy (with a $61 billion US debt in October 2008) has turned this faraway land into 2009's hottest travel destination.

The tumbling rate of the Icelandic Krona against the euro and the U.S. dollar has slashed prices by half, making it the dream getaway for many.

If anything, your trip to Iceland could be a fine line between charitable and selfish, as right now, the influx of tourism can only help restore and boost the local economy.

With its toy town capital of Reykjavik, a dramatic volcanic countryside to explore, hip nightlife to check out and even hipper locals to meet, there's something for everyone.

Shopping in Reykjavik.

The Blue Lagoon, on the Reykjanes Peninsula, is a geothermal pool surrounded by lunar landscapes.

Where to stay

101 Hotel: Icelandic gallery owner Ingibjörg Pálmadottirs' love for design comes in the form of this new four star hip hotel. The purity of the decoration — all charcoal grey and white — is a sharp contrast to the warm wooden floorboards and cosy fireplaces.

Holding the oldest postal code in Reykjavik, the hotel is also a stone's throw away from the city's opera house. Hverfisgata 10, 101 Reykjavik, 101hotel.is.

Where to eat:

Sjávarkjallarinn "Seafood Cellar": The kitsch setting — imagine a scene out of The Little Mermaid — will not put you off the mouthwatering seafood.

If you wish to play it safe, opt for the Lobster Pick-me-up, a delightful concoction of langoustine steamed in a foie-gras sauce with cauliflower, truffles, and black pepper; sjavarkjallarinn.is.

Where to go drinking

Kaffibarinn: The London Underground sign outside may fool you for a split second, but you well and truly haven't left the Arctic. Kaffibarinn is all about rock 'n' roll attitude — after all, owners are Blur frontman Damon Albarn and Icelandic film director Baltasar Kormakur.

The tiny, rather clammy inside manages to attract a bohemian crowd that stays until the early hours. Bergstadastraeti 1, Reykjavik, kaffibarinn.is.

Where to go clubbing:

Hressó: This no-frills coffee bar transforms into a funky club at dusk. Come here and you will enjoy spending your night listening to the beats of wild live music performed by Oasis and Radiohead wannabes.

The Icelandic post-party tradition is to refuel on a hot-dog, so make sure you sample one from one of the stands in central Reykjavik; hresso.is.

The hip fashion label

Steinunn: You'll forget any of Icelandic pop-star Bjork's eccentric fashion faux-pas once you step into Steinunn Sigurd's boutique. After having perfected her skills at Calvin Klein and Gucci, Steinunn has returned to Iceland to open up this atelier, whose atmosphere and sombre decor reflects the cool northern wintertime. The chunky yet feminine knits look warm and wonderful against the backdrop of lava and glass sculptures. 59 Laugavegur, second floor, steinunn.com.

On the web

- visitreykjavik.is

Read more on page 21 ››

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Costa Rica $195
Travel Jan 12 - Jan 22/wg + taxes & fees $198

USA Holidays

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Orlando 5 Nights $225
Quality Inn International + taxes & fees $227
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, 5 nights 3-star accom and complimentary car rental. Departs Jan 12/swg/wg. ADD 5-day Busch Gardens and SeaWorld admission ticket from $126.

California Fly & Drive $499
+ taxes & fees $249
INCLUDES airfare to San Francisco, return from Los Angeles and 7-day car rental with unlimited mileage to discover the Golden Coast. Departs Jan 21/inf/ac. ADD San Francisco helicopter tour from $179.

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Western Caribbean $469*
Carnival Liberty + taxes & fees $60
INCLUDES 7-day Carnival cruise, onboard meals & entertainment. Sail roundtrip from Miami and visit Cozumel, Grand Cayman and Ocho Rios. Port charges included. Sails Jan 31.

All-inclusive Holidays

Puerto Plata 4-Star $498
Allegro Playa Dorada + taxes & fees $308
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Jan 15/vat/c6. ADD Santo Domingo city tour from $73.

Cancun 4-Star $547
Oasis Cancun + taxes & fees $267
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Jan 14/vat/ts. ADD horseback riding on the beach from $96.

Costa Rica 4-Star $697
Barcelo Tambor Beach + taxes & fees $309
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Jan 13/nol/ts.

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TICO

Vancouver Island film fest
From Feb. 6-7, the 18th World Community Film Festival will be staged in Courtenay on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Over 30 films will be screened in what is billed as B.C.'s largest film festival on social justice issues; worldcommunity.ca/film.htm. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Above, a view of picturesque Reykjavik.

Left, trekking in Iceland's glacial landscapes. Right, winding down at Laugardalslaug Geothermal Pool.

Continued from page 20 »

What to visit

The Blue Lagoon Spa: Wade into the steaming natural Blue Lagoon and you'll be transported into a different world. Gaze at the lunar landscapes while you restore yourself in the warm geothermal whose 37 to 39 C heat is radiated by the lava that lies beneath the ground. On the Reykjanes Peninsula; blue lagoon.com.

Geysir and Stokkur Geysers: The Geysir and Stokkur Geysers are Iceland's oldest sources of geothermally-heated water in the remote area of the South West. Geysir, the namesake for all other geysers, is an Icelandic landmark, erupting occasionally over the years. Stokkur, on the other hand, bubbles over every five to 10 minutes, shooting a warm spray in the sky; geysircenter.com.

Laugardalslaug Geothermal Pool: Iceland's biggest geothermal swimming pool is the place to come and wind down after a day of shopping or a heavy night out in the capital.

The pure crisp air, soothing warm waters and general mystical feel will be the best rejuvenating cocktail you've had in a long time; spacity.is.

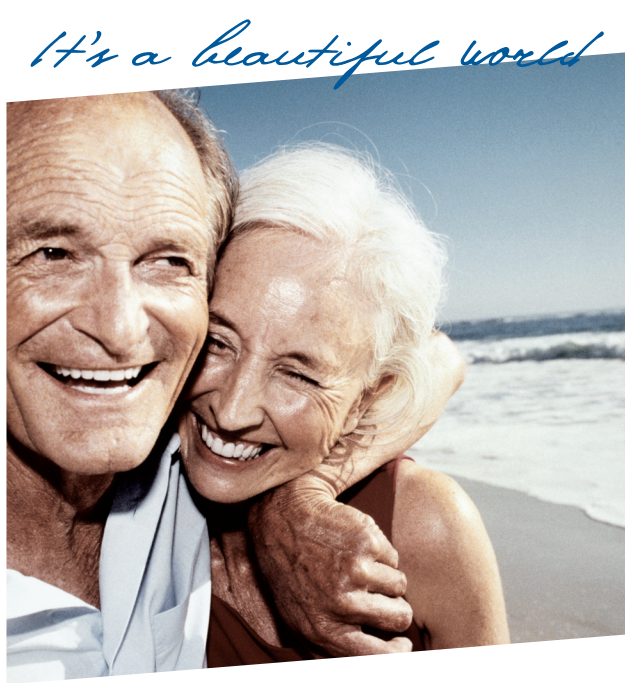
Snowmobiling in Southern Iceland: Adrenaline junkies can get their fix of fun snowmobiling along Iceland's glacial landscapes. This year-round activity lets you combine sightseeing with extreme sports; adventures.is.

Getting there

By air:
- Iceland Air currently serves 23 gateways across the Canada, the U.S. and Europe and Canada; icelandair.com.
- Budget airline Iceland Express has flights from leaving from several European airport hubs including London Stansted, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Barcelona and Stockholm ARN; icelandexpress.com.

From Reykjavík Airport to the centre:
- The Reykjavík Excursions bus Flybus can get you to your hotel in approximately one hour; flybus.is.

METRO WORLD NEWS



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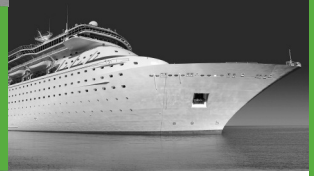

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Projections art exhibit

Regina's MacKenzie Art Gallery will host what it calls the first major exhibition in Canada to focus on "the rich history of experimentation" with projection in contemporary art since the 1960s. Projections runs from Feb. 7 to Apr. 26. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Idol-inspired Disney attraction

FLORIDA An attraction inspired by the American Idol TV show offically opens at Disney's Hollywood Studios Feb. 14.

Walt Disney World guests can register to audition in front of a Disney casting director for a chance to take part in the theme park show. Contestants who make the cut must then audition for a Disney producer. Those selected by producers will perform in front of an on-stage panel of judges and an audience of park guests who vote on each show's winners. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New water park opens in Aruba

EAGLE ISLAND A new water park has opened in Aruba.

The 2,600-square-metre Morgan's Island park opened in December near the La Cabana resort on Eagle Beach. The park features slides and rides with twists, dips and funnels, as well as a freefall, one-person water slide with a 21-metre vertical drop.

Other attractions include giant double wave pools with a wraparound lounging area for families, and a kids-only pool area with water spouts and slides.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

France rebrands itself

World's No. 1 tourism spot wants to retain its ranking

With the opulent French Riviera, iconic Eiffel Tower and luscious vineyards, France stands tall and proud as the world's No. 1 travel destination.

But it's not No. 1 in tourism revenue, to the chagrin of the country's tourism authority. So it's launched a campaign to "rebrand" France, a place already considered a dreamland by would-be travellers across the globe.

According to the UN World Tourism Organization, 82 million visitors travelled to France in 2007, an increase of three million from the year before and well ahead of No. 2 Spain and No. 3 the United States, which welcomed 58 million and 51 million visitors respectively.

But international competition, changing consumer demands and superior tourism revenue from the U.S. and Spain have provoked some serious soul-searching in French tourism circles.

The French government unveiled a new French "brand" last month, including a logo and travel campaign aimed at rejuvenating tourism revenue.

The logo features a young woman symbolizing Marianne, an allegorical figure and national symbol since the French Revolution, as she looks toward the future. The dreamy tagline, "Rendez-vous en France," is designed to seduce visitors to the land of fashion, food and fine wine.

The new tourism logo from the French government features a woman symbolizing Marianne, an allegorical figure and national symbol since the French Revolution, and the tagline, "Rendez-vous en France."

Marianne invokes what the tourism authority, the Maison de la France, labels the traits that make France unique — adventure and spontaneity, a rich history, and of course, romance.

Those with a sharp eye will notice that the word "France," just above the tagline, forms the upper half of Marianne's body. The F and R letters are her right arm, while the curve of the N, C and E form her left arm, with the A covering her body.

An earlier version of the logo was more anatomically obvious. It featured Marianne's naked breasts, joined by the "R" and "A."

That one was vetoed in June, however, apparently deemed a bit too seductive for the foreign tourist market. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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$342 +taxes & fees $205.00 HOLGUIN Don Lino 3★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 17 HOL, cu	$467 +taxes & fees $309.00 PUERTO PLATA Paraiso Tropical 3★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 20 SQV, ts	$478 +taxes & fees $205.00 CAMAGUEY Brisas Santa Lucia 4★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 22 HOL, cu	$594 +taxes & fees $308.00 LA ROMANA Catalonia Dominicus 4★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 19 NOL, 5g	$598 +taxes & fees $267.00 MANZANILLO Tesoro Manzanillo 4★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 16 VTH, ts	$697 +taxes & fees $267.00 RIVIERA MAYA Real Playa Carmen 3½★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 21 NOL, ts

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Long Night of Museums
On Jan. 31 and Aug. 29, Berlin will stage the Long Night of Museums, during which 100 museums open their doors from 6 p.m. Saturday until 2 a.m. Sunday; lange-nacht-der-museen.de. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Sweden's hostel with wings

Jumbo jet now taking bookings

When you exit Arlanda Airport on the highway toward Stockholm, you'll see a Boeing 747 on your left that looks curiously out of place.

The plane sits idle and lonely on a grass-covered mound just outside the airport perimeter, without any recognizable airline colours.

You might think the giant aircraft got lost on the way to the runway and was abandoned here, were it not for the inscription on the side: Jumbo Hostel.

Turns out this former Pan Am jumbo jet is no longer taking passengers to the skies, but will soon be accommodating them on the ground. Left inactive at Arlanda, Stockholm's main airport, after its last owner went bankrupt, the plane was rescued by a Swedish entrepreneur looking to expand his hostel business.

NIKLAS LARSSON/AP PHOTO

Oscar Dios, founder of Jumbo Hostel, is seen near a Boeing 747 as it is being turned into a hostel at Stockholm's Arlanda Airport. It will open in mid-January.

"I got information about this airplane standing abandoned at Arlanda," says Oscar Dios, who runs a hostel in Uppsala, about 30 kilometres north of Arlanda. "I thought why not try to convert it into a hostel? Since you've been converting boats and light houses and trains before into hostels."

Construction crews are working through the holidays to get the 25 rooms ready for the scheduled opening on Jan. 15. Jumbo Hostel is already taking bookings.

On the web

- jumbohostel.com

The six-square-metre rooms are spartanly furnished, with a bunk bed, an overhead luggage compartment and a flat-screen TV with entertainment as well as flight information.

Every inch of the 350-square-metre floor space is being used. There will be a reception and small cafeteria just inside the front entrance, two rows of rooms on each side of the aisle, and showers and toilets in the rear. The bubble on top is being remodelled into a conference room with first-class flight seats.

Dios is hoping for a diverse clientele, including airport taxi drivers stopping for a coffee break in the cafeteria, business travellers needing accommodation close to Arlanda and even wedding parties looking for an unusual ceremony.

As soon as the guard rails come up, couples will be able to exchange vows on the left wing, receive a small party in the conference room and spend the night in the cockpit, converted into a bridal suite with a private bathroom.

Rates range from about $47 for a bed in a shared four-bed dormitory to $210 for a private room with a twin bed and a single bed. The bridal suite costs $513 per night.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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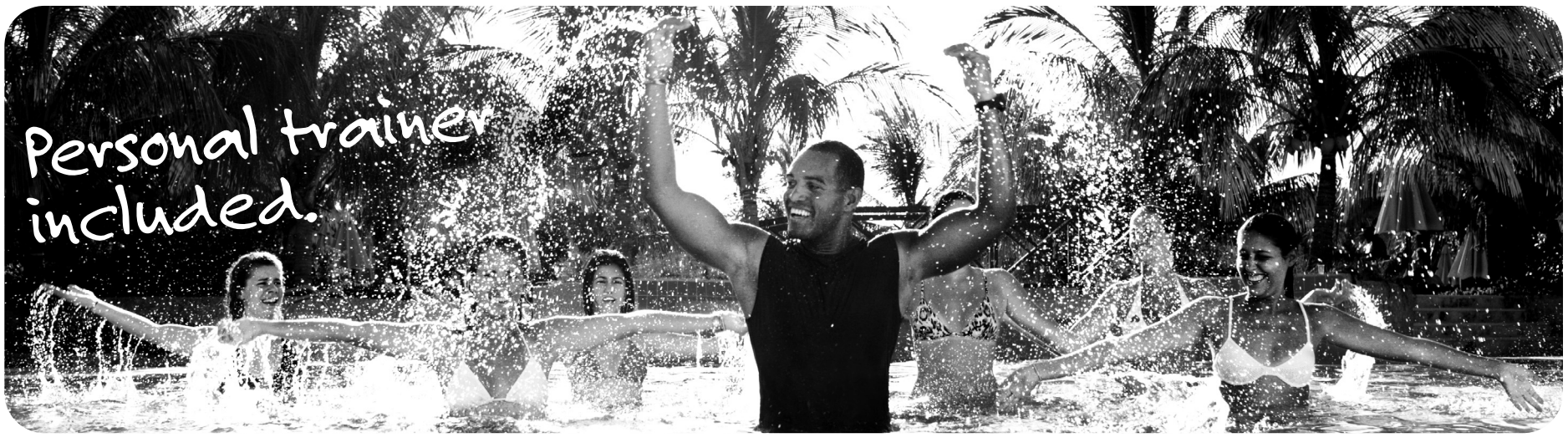

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Victoria Whiskey Festival

The fourth annual Victoria Whiskey Festival, to be held Jan. 23-24 at the Hotel Grand Pacific, will include a tasting with over 100 whiskies, as well as a day-long "whiskey school;" victoriawhiskyfestival.com. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Get a four-star holiday at three-star prices

Fuel surcharges, extra baggage fees, time-consuming security checks and fewer flight choices made the skies an unwelcoming place in 2008 as the airline industry coped with challenging times.

But while tumbling fuel prices will bring some relief, don't expect the situation to improve drastically in '09, at least not initially, experts say.

WestJet has cut the fuel surcharges many airlines adopted last summer and Air Canada has eliminated fees for second checked bags and fuel surcharges on North American flights.

But Mike Skrobica, the Air Transport Association of Canada's acting president, says there are limits to what airlines can do.

"You'd hope, in a perfect world, with the lowering of fuel surcharges that some of the motivation that caused them to put in these ancillary charges would go away, but again, because of the fuel hedging, it's going to be much more muted than it would be in a normal business cycle," he said.

Compounding the problem is the worsening economic crisis, he said, adding many people are choosing to cut discretionary spending because of economic and employment concerns.

"I'm still a firm believer ... that people are still going to travel. As much as it's a discretionary expense, it's still people's holidays and they work so hard."
Allison Eaton, Flight Centre

"Air travel is always the first to be hit when there are difficult economic times," said Joseph D'Cruz, an airline industry expert with the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management.

"As unemployment goes up, that part of the market will disappear, but more importantly, the fear of unemployment will cause people to rein back."

The economic downturn has already led to about a 15 per cent decline in air traffic, D'Cruz said, adding it isn't just affecting leisure travel.

But all is not doom and gloom for those still seeking a holiday.

Flight Centre spokeswoman Allison Eaton said Christmas and New Year's bookings were as busy as ever and she suggested there are some great all-inclusive deals to be had.

Many four- and five-star properties are selling at three-star prices, but Eaton said supply is limited and the "wait-and-see" attitude of many would-be travellers will inevitably lead to disappointment.

Flight inventory, she said, is down by about 60,000 seats and last-minute deals are unlikely unless people are extremely flexible.

Despite reports of a decline in air travel, Eaton said her travel agency hasn't seen it yet. But January is the company's busiest month for bookings as Canadians seek to escape the deep freeze or prepare for spring break so she expects the real test will come in the new year.

She remains optimistic.

"I'm still a firm believer … that people are still going to travel," she said. "As much as it's a discretionary expense, it's still people's holidays and they work so hard."

With the drop in the Canadian dollar, she predicts there might be less interest in travel to the United States and Europe. People may also opt for shorter getaways closer to home.

Noting trips to Walt Disney World are hot, she suggested the quintessential family vacation will likely remain popular.

"What I think some might do is instead of go for spring break, maybe they'll look at options that are not at peak times," Eaton said.

Despite many stories about seniors losing their life savings when the market crashed, there's little concern it will affect the thousands of "snowbirds" who follow the geese south every winter.

Eaton suggested retirees have the most flexible schedules and are more apt to fly mid-week or after the holidays to save money.

Canadian Snowbird Association spokesman Michael MacKenzie also noted that most retirees headed to Florida, Arizona or California will drive down since they're typically planning to stay for three to six months.

Much to MacKenzie's surprise, the economic downturn has actually proven a boon for retirees who happen to have a little extra cash lying around.

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- The U.S. housing crash means homes in Florida are going for half-price and the drop in gas prices is making the idea of travel more palatable.

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Heinken Experience reopens
The Heineken Experience, one of Amsterdam's most popular attractions, has reopened after a year of renovations. The tour was once regarded mostly as a way to drink unlimited amounts of booze, but the overhaul has made it more museum-like. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Metro columnnist Julia Dimon stands in front of Chernobyl's reactor No. 4, and takes a reading on her Geiger counter.

Touring Chernobyl's ghostly remnants

TheTravelJunkie

The site of an infamous power plant may not be a likely place to spend your vacation but every year, curious tourists make their way to Chernobyl for a look at where the world's worst nuclear disaster took place.

On Apr. 26, 1986, at 1:23 a.m., reactor No. 4 exploded, releasing nearly nine tons of radioactive material into the environment. That's 90 times as much as the Hiroshima bomb. It contaminated the air, soil and water in parts of Ukraine, Belarus, Poland and Russia.

There are disputes surrounding the number of deaths the accident caused. The World Health Organization reports that fewer than 50 deaths can be directly attributed to that day, and predicts some 4,000 people could eventually die of radiation exposure released in the melt down. Greenpeace contends that the eventual fatalities will be closer to 93,000.

However, the contaminated zones are apparently safe enough for tourists to visit. (I'm not entirely convinced, I suppose I'll know for sure if I start glowing green.) There are several Kiev-based tour agencies that offer all-inclusive day trips to Chernobyl.

My own trip to the site began with a 120-kilometre drive from Kiev, to an area near the reactor called the exclusion zone. I presented my passport at a series of checkpoints, got a safety briefing, signed a waiver and drove through a deserted area.

Despite high levels of radiation, everything looked normal. The grass was a healthy shade of green, trees were full and leafy, bees were pollinating. Nature has been resilient — or it appears so, at any raate.

I hopped out of the van and stood in front of the infamous reactor. It was incredible how close I could get, considering there's still radioactive sludge brewing inside.

My Geiger counter was reading off the charts near patches of moss on the ground. Since the moss is soaked with radiation, tourists are warned against touching or standing on any clumps.

No eating, drinking or smoking either — although the tour group did end up drinking vodka with a guide who claimed it would protect against radiation poisoning.

Next was a visit to Pripyat, a town three kilometres away from the reactor, from which 45,000 people were evacuated following the disaster.

Walking around this abandoned city, I felt as if I were the last woman on earth. It was post-apocalyptic.

Wilderness had taken over, dominating cement structures, causing them to crumble and crack like Roman ruins. Weeds pushed through floor boards and branches overtook ex-apartments.

Rusted cribs and burndt dolls were scattered around a former preschool. With school books strewn around the room and black boards still fresh with chalky arithmetic, the scene was a time capsule of Soviet-era life.

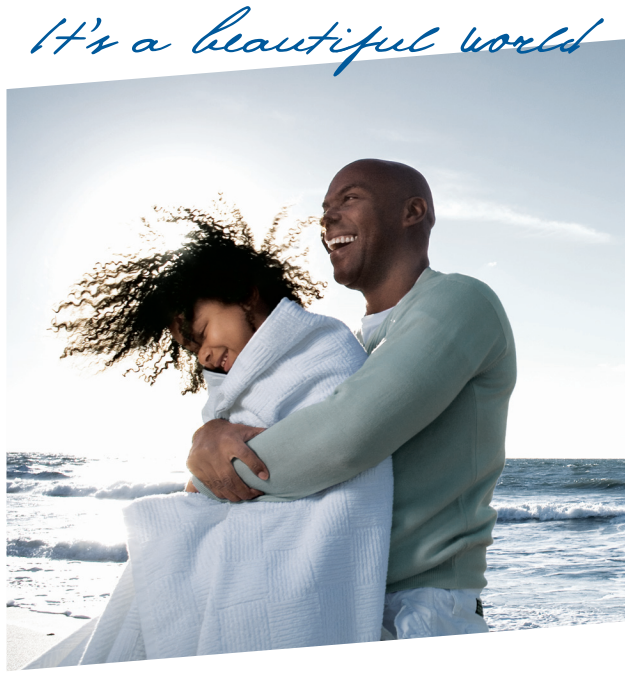
An amusement park, set to open the day after the nuclear explosion, was just a graveyard of rusting bumper cars and a lone ferris wheel.

The scariest part of the tour was learning that the "sarcophagus," a concrete-and-steel shell built to contain Reactor No. 4's radioactive spew, is leaking.

Our guide warned, that if the proper measurements aren't taken in the next few years to rebuild this deteriorating shelter, there's a real risk of a more severe Chernobyl-type disaster happening again.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing on OLN, and editor of thetraveljunkie.ca.

It's a beautiful world



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New Brunswick to review student grant program

At the request of New Brunswick Premier Shawn Graham, the Department of Post-Secondary Education will review a student grant program in which first-year students enrolled at the province's public universities receive $2,000 towards their education. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE Centennial College

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Sexes mark mobile difference

Men favour features while women aim for aesthetics in cellphones

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Men and women pick and use their mobile phones differently, a new study by Ipsos Reid and Windows Mobile shows.

The study found men were more likely to choose a phone for its features while women were more likely to choose one for its form and appearance. Men were also more likely than women to sleep with their mobile device next to their bed at night. The study also showed men admitted to calling their friends most often while women were more likely to call family members.

Laurence Ashworth, professor of marketing at the Queen's School of Business, says the results show men and women use mobile devices for different reasons.

A study revealed that 36 per cent of people admitted they would search through a garbage can to find their phone.

"Men use the devices for a broader range of functions that relate to specific things they want to achieve in their lives. For women these devices fulfill an aesthetic goal — the look of the product conveys something about themselves," Ashworth said.

Both sexes agreed they spend more time with their mobile phone than with their significant other — though men were more likely (45 per cent) to admit to giving their device more attention than their significant other compared to women (28 per cent). Ashworth says the statistic isn't surprising but definitely sobering.

"I think people do become psychologically attached to phones because we are enormously reliant on them. People would go to the ends of the earth to save these devices." Laurence Ashworth of the Queen's School of Business

"We already spend more time at work than with our significant other, but I think if people stepped back they might take a look at how they use these devices," he said.

When it came to picking colours for their mobile phones, men were much more likely to stick to black compared to women who would pick a wider variety of colours.

"Men are clearly staying away from feminine-style colours. Not one man in the survey said they would choose a pink mobile phone. There's still a social stigma attached to a man using a pink phone," Ashworth said.

Men and women did agree on how far they would go to retrieve a phone in unsavoury circumstances. Thirty-six per cent overall admitted they would search through a garbage can to find their phone while 20 per cent said they would reach into a toilet to fish their phone out. One in twenty admitted they would pull their phone out of a pile of dog excrement. In all above situations, 40 per cent of men and women said they would continue to use their phone. Ashworth suggests the responses highlight the importance mobile phones have in people's daily lives.

"I think people do become psychologically attached to phones because we are enormously reliant on them. People would go to the ends of the earth to save these devices," Ashworth said.

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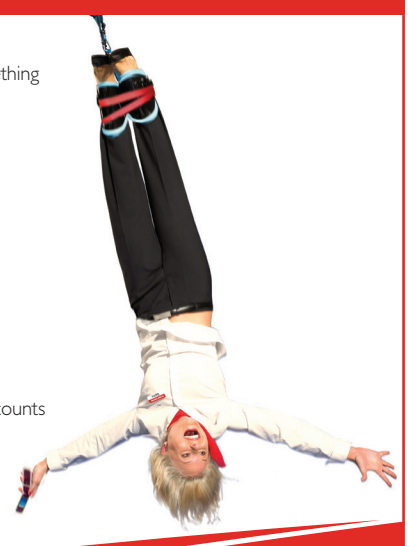

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Daily suffering, part of the job

Curtain Call

JON TATTRIE
for Metro Canada

Death is a terrifying raider for most of us, stealing lives out of the blue, but it's a close colleague for hospital chaplains. From breast-cancer patients dying peacefully as a music therapist plays the harp in a palliative-care unit to the frantic and often futile effort to save lives in intensive care, the end of life is a daily business for people like Buffy Harper.

The staff chaplain at the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax says her training in theology, philosophy, sociology and psychology helps her gain an important perspective on death.

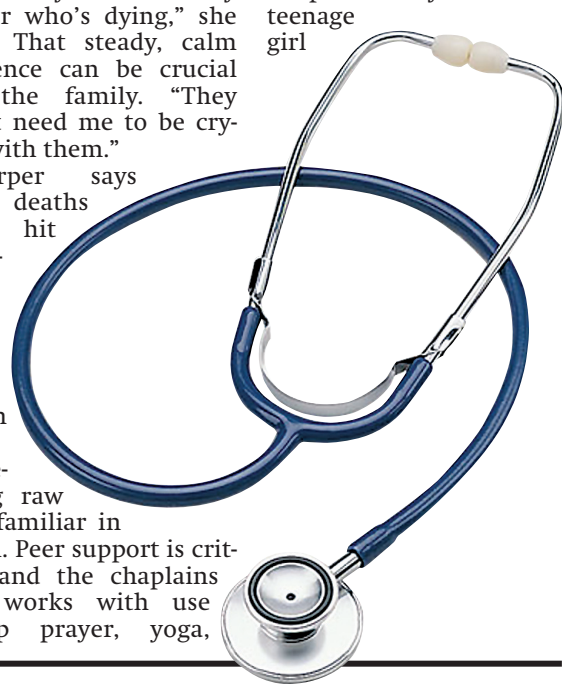
"We have the training to maybe understand death and dying a little differently than somebody who is just hitting it," Harper says. "There's the acceptance that death is a part of life, though that doesn't make it any easier."

A key part of the job is empathetic listening, mixed with a strong dose of professionalism. "We hear (the suffering) and we feel it, but you know, it's not my mother or my father who's dying," she says. That steady, calm presence can be crucial for the family. "They don't need me to be crying with them."

Harper says the deaths that hit chaplains hard are ones that touch on something raw and familiar in them. Peer support is critical and the chaplains she works with use group prayer, yoga, meditation, tai chi or just talking with each other to get through the rough days. Spiritual strength plays a big role, too.

"It's not just me doing this: I have faith behind what I do."

You can't be in the middle of all that suffering and not take your blows. Harper vividly recalls a teenage girl committing suicide. She stayed with the family all night as the medical team tried to save her.



"Death is a part of life, though that doesn't make it any easier."
Hospital chaplain
Buffy Harper

"Two days later, I had aches and pains all over my body and I knew that the shock and the trauma of being with that family (had finally) hit me."

So why does she keep going back? Because death is going to happen and she can ease the suffering of those dying and those left behind.

"The family is just so grateful that you've stayed with them; you're a witness and you've sat with them. You didn't leave because it was uncomfortable," she says. "It happens to people every day. We see it, we know it's not as traumatic as you tend to think when you only see it once or twice in your life. There is a sense of peace around it. It's not the enemy."

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London police officers cleared in confrontation with Fanshawe student
Ontario's Special Investigations Unit has concluded that two London Police Service officers did not commit a criminal act when arresting a first-year Fanshawe College student during Orientation Week in September. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Start your new year with Centennial

When it comes to learning something new, a solution for your New Year's resolution may be closer than you think.

January is a great time to enrol in a part-time Centennial College course to acquire a new job-related skill or pursue a personal interest — everything from learning a new language to preparing your home for sale.

Centennial offers a number of new courses this month to augment the more than 1,200 evening, weekend and online courses aimed at working adults who want to advance themselves with a small investment of time.

Centennial's popular Home Staging 101 course helps homeowners organize their house and get it ready for sale — or for better living. With real estate in a down market right now, home staging is more beneficial than ever to help the seller get the jump on the competition by making the best first impression possible.

Spa therapies have become the fourth largest leisure activity in North America. Centennial offers a part-time certificate program in spa operations for registered massage therapists (RMTs), and a second one in infection control for spa professionals.

Both programs consist of three required courses that can be taken in the evening and weekends. Centennial also offers a new selection of courses in esthetics — everything from proper hygiene to facial massage and mask treatments.

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Home offices and small businesses wishing to have the cost savings of a shared computer network without purchasing a complex, expensive system can learn to assemble a small network with commonly available equipment and software.

Networking for the small/home office is geared to learners with a limited technical background. Concepts discussed include protocols, firewalls and shared Internet connections.

Learning a new language is always a welcome pastime, and it comes in handy if you're planning a winter or spring vacation. Centennial offers a number of courses in French, Spanish and Chinese Mandarin to appeal to learners at every level of comprehension.

The college also has a complete certificate program in American Sign Language and Deaf Culture. The emphasis is on interpersonal communication and functional use of the language, rather than interpreting skills.

The Smart Divorce course addresses the myths and misconceptions of divorce and its impact on adults and children. People often divorce without fully understanding what they are getting into. Participants can learn what to expect of the divorce process and how to reduce its complexity and associated costs.

Graphic designers who want to expand their knowledge of Adobe CS Suite software with new productivity tips and tricks can take new hands-on workshops at Centennial's mid-town campus on the Danforth.

Adobe CS is an industry-standard design and production tool that brings together Illustrator for art, Photoshop for digital images and InDesign layout software. There are also quick workshops on instant web pages and PDFs.

Part-time courses at Centennial are typically priced from $30 for a three-hour workshop to $599 for highly specialized technical courses. Course start dates vary throughout the winter semester.

For course information, call 416-289-5300 or visit centennialcollege.ca/ce.

–MARK TOLJAGIC

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Automakers' and Université du Quebec à Montréal rescue packages share similarities
In a column published last month in the Montreal Gazette, Henry Aubin compares the government bailouts for the automotive industry and for the Université du Québec à Montréal. Aubin observes that in both cases, the automakers and UQAM were "blind to reality." **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

'I quit' doesn't always hold up

WorkplaceLaw

Upset after a meeting with her boss, Joey Bru said she was quitting. Believing that she had done just that, Bru's employer replaced her. But, according to a British Columbia judge, even when employees say they are leaving, they may not have actually quit.

Fifty-nine-year-old Bru worked as a deli clerk for two and a half years at the Kelowna, B.C., based Mediterranean Market. Tensions ran high at the fast paced deli counter and Bru and her colleagues often quarrelled.

Having butted heads with a co-worker on several occasions, Bru was summoned to a meeting by her boss, Cindy Morton, before her shift started in order to try to clear the air. Although the meeting went smoothly, Bru became annoyed and left the deli to go home. She later phoned in to say that she wouldn't be able to work that day.

Before her next shift, Bru called Morton and in a short conversation told her that she couldn't take it any longer and that she was quitting. Believing the matter was finished, Morton never asked if Bru was sure she wanted to quit or if she was only voicing her frustration. She simply accepted Bru's statement and moved on.

The next day, Bru called Morton again to inquire whether she still had a job but was left with the impression she had already been replaced.

Bru later sued for wrongful dismissal stating that she had not quit. Rather, she argued that by interpreting her actions a resignation, the deli had actually dismissed her.

Justice Neill Brown of the British Columbia Supreme Court accepted Bru's arguments that she had not truly intended to resign but was in an emotional state of upset when she said the words "I quit."

In finding that Bru had been wrongfully dismissed, he found that the deli failed to consider the surrounding circumstances and instead relied on the pure black letter transcript of what Bru had stated. Morton knew that Bru had been stressed and that it was out of character for her to simply resign. This should have raised a red flag as to whether Bru had unequivocally meant to leave.

Employers can't ignore the warning signs where an employee blurts out that she no longer wishes to work. By simply accepting what Bru said and moving on, without more, the deli ended the relationship, not Bru.

Where an employee's resignation is disputed, consider the following questions:

A consideration

- When an employee has uttered, "I quit," have they been asked to take some time to reflect on the situation and confirm his or her intentions in writing?

- Is an impulsive resignation out of character for the employee? Or are there any personal circumstances potentially clouding the employee's decision.
- Did the employee make conflicting statements or demonstrate an intention to continue to work, such as showing up at work the next day or did she evince a clear intention to leave, such as saying goodbye to others?
- Has the employer acted in good faith in accepting the purported resignation or was its acceptance simply an easier way to rid itself of that employee?

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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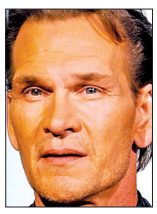
Polanski wants sex case moved from Los Angeles
Roman Polanski, who last month moved to have a decades-old charge of unlawful intercourse with a minor dismissed, filed a motion this week to have the entire case removed from the Los Angeles Superior Court system and handed to the California Judicial Council for review. **EONLINE.COM**

Entertainment

Celebrity split
Medium star Patricia Arquette has filed for divorce from her husband of more than two years, actor Thomas Jane, Los Angeles court papers filed Monday reveal. **PEOPLE.COM**

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Swayze chats with Walters about illness


Swayze

PEOPLE
Patrick Swayze says his yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer put him "through hell" while he pushed ahead on his new TV series.

"I've never been one to run from a challenge," Swayze tells Barbara Walters in an interview that airs tonight. But the 56-year-old actor owns up to his fear: "Yeah, I'm scared. Yeah, I'm angry. Yeah, I'm (asking), 'Why me?'"

Swayze's new police drama, The Beast, which premieres next week, meant gruelling workdays, with chemotherapy sessions on the weekends. He rejected painkilling drugs that would have taken the edge off his performance.

"You can bet that I'm going through hell," Swayze says. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Accents: To fake it or not

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

Of all the criticism that Tom Cruise has received for playing a German soldier in his latest thriller Valkyrie, the one that stands out is for his lack of a Bavarian accent.

"It seems to be the point of contention that will not die and frankly if that's the problem (critics) have, I'm happy," stated screenwriter and co-producer Christopher McQuarrie in a recent interview.

"I'd much rather have them attack me than the people in the story."

But that's precisely the point that's unclear — do fake accents detract audiences from the story? While critics have blasted Valkyrie and its use of American, English and German actors speaking in their own dialect as distracting, McQuarrie argues the opposite.

Actors Liev Schreiber, left, and Daniel Craig appear in a scene from the upcoming film Defiance.

"Everybody walking around speaking these German accents, it starts to feel a little bit like a Mel Brooks comedy," said McQuarrie. "We just said, 'It seems to me that this is a human story as much as it is a German story and can we just dispense with the absurdity?'"

Many filmmakers would debate that argument. Director Edward Zwick, who later this month will be releasing Defiance starring Daniel Craig (better known as James Bond), is one. For his drama about a group of war-time Russian resistance fighters, the accent was absolutely necessary.

"We had a cast made of Americans, Australians, English, Lithuanians, Russians and for everyone to speak with a different accent would've been entirely weird to me," Zwick said.

The Blood Diamond director also insists that adopting the native accent in which a film is set isn't just for the benefit of authenticity either.

"I think it might've helped Daniel disappear into the part — some people's perceptions of James Bond and a lot of that (needs to) happen very quickly."

Still, getting it right is imperative. Actors who mangle dialects are vilified by critics (I'm looking at you, Keanu Reeves). No matter how slick a flick is otherwise, a movie lives and dies by its character's believability.

It causes one to consider: To fake an accent or not to fake an accent, that's the question. For the makers of Valkyrie, the answer comes without regret.

"I'm quite certain that the half of the audience that doesn't have a problem with it would be mocking us now for the outrageous German accents," said McQuarrie, before quickly adding. "I'll take the half that I agree with."

Travolta family returns to U.S. with remains of son

ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO
Jett Travolta

Actor John Travolta and wife Kelly Preston have returned to Florida with the remains of their 16-year-old son, Jett, who died at the family vacation home in Grand Bahama.

The couple received an urn with his ashes and left the island chain on Monday night, according to Obie Wilchcombe, a member of the Bahamas parliament and a family friend.

"Everything was in place, the cremation was completed, and they decided to leave," Wilchcombe told The Associated Press on Tuesday. He said the family is back in Ocala, Fla., where they have a home.

Doctors in the Bahamas performed an autopsy on Jett on Monday but did not release results. However, a Bahamas undertaker told the AP the teen's death certificate had "seizure" as the cause of death.

Jett Travolta had a history of seizures and was found unconscious Friday in a bathroom.

The body was in "great condition," said Glen Campbell, assistant director of the Bahamas funeral home that handled Jett's remains, though police officials had said the teen hit his head on a bathtub.

Funeral plans have not been announced.

In Ocala, Mayor Randy Ewers said the city sent the Travolta family condolences and will give them space and privacy.

"They're fantastic people, really family oriented," Ewers said. "We want to respect their privacy as much as possible."

In a public statement Sunday, Travolta, 54, and Preston, 46, said they were "heartbroken that our time with him was so brief." **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

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Latifah still Queen of Jenny Craig
Queen Latifah will reign another year at Jenny Craig. The Grammy-winning singer and Oscar-nominated actress, who became spokesperson for the weight-loss chain last year, will continue through 2009. **PEOPLE.COM**

Juror's haunted memory spurs movie

A TV movie airing tonight shines a light on a real-life murder case that has haunted a Canadian writer for some three decades.

Of Murder and Memory is loosely based on Linda Spalding's 2006 book Who Named the Knife, which chronicled her long-ago involvement in the trial of Maryann Acker.

"I read the book and I thought it was such a powerful story," said Toronto-based Semi Chellas, who wrote the script for the TV movie.

In 1978, Acker, an 18-year-old Mormon, and her new husband, an ex-con, were arrested in California in connection with a robbery and murder spree there and in Hawaii.

Spalding was living in Hawaii at the time and served on the jury of Acker's trial, but was dismissed on the last day after showing up to court five minutes late.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/ CTV

Annabeth Gish, left, and Chandra West star in Murder and Memory, a made-for-TV movie inspired by an American woman's murder conviction 27 years ago in Hawaii.

Acker was convicted of first-degree murder in Hawaii in 1982 — largely because of testimony given by her husband — but Spalding was unconvinced of the woman's guilt and felt hers may have been the lone voice of dissent had she remained on the jury.

Some 20 years later, after Spalding found the diary she'd kept during the trial, she tracked down Acker in a Chino, Calif., women's prison and started corresponding with her. Acker was convicted in California as well and is currently serving two life sentences.

Chellas said she was intrigued by the prospect of bringing the story to the screen.

"It really makes you ask: 'What do you believe, and when is justice served, and when has someone paid the price?'"

Acker is currently awaiting a retrial in Hawaii due to begin next week.

The movie features American actress Annabeth Gish as Sally Linden, a role inspired by Spalding. Edmonton-born actress Chandra West plays Theresa Nichol, a fictional character inspired by Acker.

"There are certain characters I've played over the years that resonate with you and for me, this is definitely one of them," said West, who read Spalding's book and researched Acker's case before filming started in Toronto, Hamilton and Peterborough, Ont.

"I think about her sometimes," added West, whose husband in the film is played by Hugh Dillon.

Of Murder and Memory airs tonight on CTV.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

In brief

LEGAL An attorney for actors Josh Brolin and Jeffrey Wright says prosecutors have agreed to drop all charges in an incident at a Louisiana bar last year. Brolin, Wright and five crew members of the Oliver Stone film W. were arrested on misdemeanour charges at the Stray Cat Club on July 12 for interfering with police officers after a disturbance involving a crew member broke out.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Ferguson announces surprise wedding

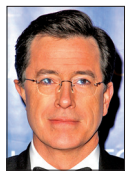
Craig Ferguson made a surprise announcement on his CBS Late Late Show Monday night: He got married over the holidays. Ferguson, 46, wed his longtime girlfriend Megan Wallace Cunningham, an art dealer. **PEOPLE.COM**

Colbert adopts Colmes for a day

COMEDY Jettisoned by his longtime co-host Sean Hannity, Alan Colmes was adopted by Stephen Colbert — for a day, at least.

On Monday's The Colbert Report, Colbert introduced the Fox News commentator as his new co-host.

It was the first episode of the Comedy Central show following the holiday break, and Colbert unveiled a completely new format, dubbing the show Colbert & Colmes. The new design featured a C & C graphic and a chair behind the desk for Colmes (albeit one a foot or two shorter than Colbert's).



Colbert

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3-D TV tech is not the answer

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Philips has announced a glasses-free 3-D display, but our columnist questions why viewers are expected to respond more to 3-D images as opposed to better stories or access to more shows?

THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOUR SET: There are some deep and serious changes happening to the way people watch TV, changes that are beyond the control of the people who make and broadcast the shows.

The essence of the change is choice, as viewers demand more of it in their selection of shows to watch, and in the technology they use to help expand their choices beyond what's offered by the networks, and when. The industry seems to sense that technology is playing a part, but if two recent stories are any indicator, they're acting true to form and missing the plot entirely.

The Los Angeles Times reported that the Consumer Electronics Show running this week in Las Vegas will showcase 3-D TV technology from companies like Panasonic, Samsung and Texas Instruments, hoping to bring into the home the new 3-D technologies behind limited release versions of movies like Bolt, Beowulf, and Journey To The Center Of The Earth.

3-D's first heyday in the '50s produced more kitsch than art in its brief heyday. It's a legacy that comes bundled with every pair of 3-D glasses, as acknowledged by a Texas Instruments executive who told the Times that "unlike earlier attempts, it's not just gimmick to try to sell a bad horror movie."

It's those glasses, however — so easy to lose or break — that are probably 3-D's biggest obstacle. Take it from me, nobody wears glasses because they want to, and they're a constant reminder of the novelty aspect of 3-D, and the goofy and abject relationship a viewer is forced to adopt with the technology. Even though Philips has announced a glasses-free 3-D display, the question no one has been able to answer is why, particularly, viewers will respond more to 3-D imagery as opposed to better stories, or simple access to more shows.

Then there's the news in Broadcasting & Cable magazine that this month will see the debut of HD Seinfeld episodes from CBS. Once again, no one has bothered to explain why being able to pick out the pattern on Kramer's Hawaiian shirts will enhance the show's comedy.

It's the same mistake the music industry made in the '90s, assuming that consumers wanted higher fidelity while pushing formats like SACD, as they opted for MP3s that could be downloaded in minutes or seconds, and it looks like the industry will chase the wild goose again, pushing high tech formats while its audience is happily watching lo-fi avi files on their laptops.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

TO	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 1/7/09	265	353	2	TVO	Galapagos (Part 1 of 3)		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		New Tricks "Mad Dogs"		Human Edge		
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Bones (HDTV PA)		Bones (HDTV PA)		House		News (N)
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Just for Laughs		CBC News: the fifth estate (N)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		13: Fear Is Real (N)		Hates Chris	Friends	I Love Money		News (N)
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	Law & Order: SVU		*Of Murder and Memory* (2008, Drama) Annabeth Gish.				News (N)
	218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Knight Rider (HDTV) (N)		The 35th Annual People's Choice Awards (HDTV)				News (N)
	137	763	13	TFO	Le Printemps des Voyageurs		L'Inquisition révélée		*La Montagne de Baya* (1997, Drame) Ouardia Kessi.				Évolution
	-	-	14	-	Cold Case "Joseph"		News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	*An Officer and a Gentleman* ★★★ (1982, Drama) Richard Gere.					To Serve and Protect		Becker
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	The 35th Annual People's Choice Awards (HDTV) (Live)				News (N)
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Knight Rider (HDTV) (N)		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order "Chattel"		News (N)
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Scrubs	Scrubs	20/20 (HDTV) (N)		Barbara Walters Special		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Old Christine	Old Christine	Sarah Connor Chronicles		Law & Order "Chattel"		News (N)
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	Bones (HDTV PA)		Bones (HDTV PA)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Vicar of Dibley	Elvis Lives: The 25th Anniversary Concert			John Denver: A Song's Best Friend			Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	13: Fear Is Real (N)		90210 (HDTV)		PIX News at Ten Tong.		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV) (N)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
	298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	13: Fear-Real
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		Fast Food Junkies		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	CNBC Reports (HDTV)				On the Money		American Greed (N)		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	World Combat League		The Ultimate Fighter		Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected		Hockey Central
	400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	NHL Hockey Montreal Canadiens at New York Rangers. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre (HDTV) (Live)		
	411	457	58	OLN	Bounty Hunter	Dakar Rally	Survivorman		Mantracker		Bounty Hunter	Dakar Rally	Survivorman
	417	406	81	SC	Pinks (HDTV)	Pass Time	Am. Thunder	Am. Thunder	Pinks	Pinks Outtakes	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pinks
family	551	542	25	YTV	Scorpion	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Adrenaline Proj	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach		Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45	TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6teen	6teen	Misadventures	Futurama	The Critic	Robot Chicken	Bromwell High
	556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	Grocery Bag	Grocery Bag	How Clean	Too Posh	Maxed Out (N)	Body Rev	Maxed Out
	570	580	29	MM	So You Think You Can Dance				So You Think You Can Dance				PunchMuch
	615	520	31	A&E	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Dog the Bounty Hunter		Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Un Ciclone In Famiglia 2				Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
	571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	MusicProfile	Where You At	Revival	Back In	Back In	All-Time Top 10		Fabulous Life
	575	583	38	CMT	CMT's Greatest		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Great Big Sea
	616	521	39	SHO	The Outer Limits		About a Girl	About a Girl	The Guard		Big Love		House
	620	523	40	BVO	The Achievers	Landscape	Arts & Minds	Bravo!Videos	Wingfield	Wingfield	Très Portugal	Art is a Mirror	Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	X-Weighted		Real Housewives of OC		Filthy Rich: Cattle Drive		ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Hiatus"		Cities of the Underworld		The Real Da Vinci Code		NCIS "Hiatus"		Unlocking-Past
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Comedy Inc.	RENO 911!	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Mansions	Property Shop	Property Virgin	Unsellable	Hid Potential	Really Big Flip	Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*Air Force One* ★★★ (1997, Suspense) Harrison Ford, Gary Oldman.					Seinfeld	Family Guy
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*House Party 2* ★★ (1991, Musical Comedy) Kid 'N Play.				Keyshia Cole	Brother	Judge Hatchett
	627	528	50	SPC	Lost "Greatest Hits"		Lost (Part 1 of 2)		The Dresden Files		Rabbit Fall	Rabbit Fall	Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52	MTV	Mom & Dad	After	MTV News	Cribs	Bromance		The Real World (N)		MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Reality	Ad Persuasion	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
	603	561	56	FOOD	Chef at Home	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Iron Chef America		Top Chef "Focus Group"		Restaurant
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Summer Wine	Dinnerladies	Darling Buds of May		John and Yoko: Peace		Poltergeist
	621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show (N)		TMZ (N)	etalk	In Style Celebrity Weddings		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Wonder Pets	Nght Grdn	Friend Rabbit	Franklin	Little Bear	Miss Spider	Big Comfy	Rolie Polie Olie	Max & Ruby
	115	711	101	TVA	Poule-oeufs or	Sketch Show	Destinées (HDTV) (SC)		Deux filles le matin (SC)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) *Le Majestic* (2001)	
	126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Lost in Austen		The West Wing		Mediums	Psychic Detect	Mediums
	300	601	301	M1	*Definitely, Maybe* ★★★ (2008, Romance-Comedy)				*I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry* (2007, Comedy)				*Spiderwck Chr*
	305	612	306	PIX	(7:15) *Jericho Mansions* ★★ (2003, Suspense)				*Arlington Road* ★★★ (1999, Suspense) Jeff Bridges.				*Jon Mnemonic*

critics' corner

The 35th Annual People's Choice Awards
You picked them; now watch them collect their prizes. As the name makes clear, fan votes determine the winners of these awards, which cover movies, music and television. Acting nominees include Kate Hudson, Anne Hathaway, Will Smith, Hugh Laurie and the late Heath Ledger. Up for honors in the music categories are Rihanna, Alicia Keys, Carrie Underwood, Chris Brown and more. Queen Latifah - a nominee for favorite leading lady — returns as host. 9 PM on CBS E!

Maxed Out
It's only natural for parents to want to give their kids everything they didn't have. But one thing many parents forget to give their children is an understanding of money and budgeting. When you combine kids who think money grows on trees and parents who hate to say no, the result can be disaster. In this new episode, host Alison Griffiths tries to help one such family take control of its spending and teach the kids a few lessons about money. 10 PM on W

Rip Torn pleads not guilt to DUI

CHARGES Actor Rip Torn has pleaded not guilty to drunken driving charges in Connecticut, nearly two years after being fined and losing his licence on similar charges in New York.

The 77-year-old Salisbury, Conn., resident appeared in Bantam Superior Court on Monday.

He pleaded not guilty to illegal operation of a motor vehicle while under the influence and failure to drive in the proper lane.

Police say a state trooper stopped Torn on Dec. 14 on Route 44 shortly after he left the White Hart Inn in Salisbury.

The town of about 4,000 people is in the northwestern corner of the state that borders New York and Massachusetts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

Kenya Hunt, exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle

See complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and purchase tickets at metronews.ca/movies

Leona puts on writer's hat
Leona Lewis is to publish her autobiography. The Bleeding Love singer, 23, has signed a book deal with Hodder and Stoughton to reveal the story of her rise to worldwide fame. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

Celebrity Buzz

Brit falls prey to Twitter pranksters

PEOPLE Britney Spears has been targeted by online pranksters who have crudely mocked her private parts, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The Womanizer singer was left red-faced when the upsetting message was posted on her account on networking site Twitter.

Twitter officials were quick to take down the offensive message, and insist they are working to make Twitter more secure, the gossip site says.

A notice on the site read: "A number of high-profile Twitter accounts were compromised this morning, and fake/spam updates were sent on their behalf. We have identified the cause and blocked it. We are working to restore compromised accounts."

Britney is not the only famous face to have her Twitter account hijacked. Others to fall foul of jokers include U.S. president-elect Barack Obama, political commentator Bill O'Reilly and U.S. newsreader Rick Sanchez.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Amy's holiday fling?

PEOPLE For a change of pace, Amy Winehouse is looking fit in 2009 as she enjoys the Caribbean sunshine alongside a sporty hunk, people.com reports.

The website noted the multiple Grammy Award winner, 25, has been pictured on the arm of former rugby player Joshua Bowman as she continues her vacation in St. Lucia.

Bowman, who is quoted in the U.K.'s Daily Mail saying, "She's just a cool girl, very nice, and we're just very friendly," is said to be on the island with his mother and sister. He is a former player with rugby team Saracens and has since turned to acting.

People.com adds that he said of his new friend, "She's a good laugh — she is such a lovely girl and on great form. I can't say much more than that."

Some reports are calling her friendship with Bowman a "holiday romance." The actor's reps had no further comment.

Winehouse, who has been plagued with ill health for much of 2008, has been seen kicking a soccer ball around the beach and running on the sands — clearly loving the life away from the turmoil of her life back in the U.K. that has seen her husband Blake Fielder-Civil jailed.

Winehouse's U.K. rep Chris Goodman is also not commenting on Bowman and he cannot confirm some reports that she and Fielder-Civil have split. Some people close to her expect them to be together when he leaves jail.

"She has been enjoying herself on her break and meeting lots of new people. There are many like-minded people there having extended breaks. Amy is a friendly person and very sociable and behaving exactly as I would expect her to do," Goodman says.

Winehouse keeps extending her time in the Caribbean, but must be back in Europe for a court appearance in Norway on Jan. 12, people.com adds.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Lindsay denies breakup rumours

RELATIONSHIP Lindsay Lohan strongly denied media reports she has split with Samantha Ronson, people.com reports. In a MySpace Celebrity Blog posting under "rumors," the actress writes, "Little piece of TRUE information: We did NOT break up!"

Lohan, 22, tells media outlets reporting the split, "Get your stories straight please. It's really annoying to have all of your friends emailing you saying, i saw, i read, etc ... NOT TRUE."

She signs the post with a happy face and "xoxox Lindsay," people.com adds.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Smokes and drinks for unpregnant Moss

PEOPLE Kate Moss seems to have put an end to rumours that she is pregnant by smoking and drinking on holiday, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The supermodel has been snapped puffing on cigarettes and drinking beer while sunning herself in Thailand with boyfriend Jamie Hince and daughter Lila Grace.

She has however been seen patting her belly and wearing loose fitting clothing leaving onlookers confused but we think it's safe to say she is not with child, femalefirst.co.uk adds.

The baby rumours began in December when Kate and Jamie were said to have gathered friends and family at their home for a big announcement. She was said to have announced that she wasn't pregnant but at the time not everyone was convinced. The latest snaps seem to confirm this though, the website says.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

'I used to be a hooligan'

PEOPLE Noel Gallagher used to be a soccer hooligan, according to femalefirst.co.uk.

The Oasis guitarist confessed his lifestyle used to be even more turbulent before he became a rock star when he went to Manchester City games with notoriously dangerous gangs including Mayne Line Crew, Under-5s and Young Guvnors.

He said: "I knew all that lot and I still see a few of them today. They were quite mad times. Half of us were on the dole.

"The grounds we used to go to 20 years ago were dangerous, especially night games at Leeds and places like that, and wondering whether or not you'd make it home in one piece."

Noel also revealed how his love for sport inspired his music career when he united the crowd in song at the Kippax stand at his team's old ground Maine Road.

The 41-year-old rocker, who played live at the famous stadium at the peak of Oasis' '90s popularity, added to Britain's The Sun newspaper: "I did start a song in the Kippax when I'd had a drink. Probably something like, Everywhere We Go or similar and everyone joined in.

"So maybe the first seeds of my songwriting career were sown at the back of the Kippax."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

Kate overjoyed for ex, new dad Armstrong

PEOPLE Kate Hudson couldn't be more thrilled for former fling Lance Armstrong, who is expecting a child with girlfriend Anna Hansen, usmagazine.com reports.

Asked if she's happy for her ex, she told the website at Monday's Bride Wars premiere in New York, "Of course! Oh, yeah!"

Hudson also said her new "I Do!" comedy hasn't made her want to wed again. (She split from ex-husband Chris Robinson in 2006.)

"I'm a girl. I think all girls, deep down, have that fairy tale thing," she said, adding that she already had her dream wedding. "I was so in love. It was such an amazing day — and it should be," she added. "Relationships and love should be celebrated."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Cowell helps singer Cole

PEOPLE Simon Cowell has hired a team of top lawyers to help get Cheryl Cole a U.S. working visa, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The music mogul — who hired the Girls Aloud singer as a judge on U.K. TV talent show The X Factor — is so keen to kick start the star's career in America he is doing everything he can to convince authorities to allow her to sing in the country.

Cheryl has been struggling to obtain the essential paperwork after being convicted of assault in 2003.

A source said: "Simon was dazzled by Cheryl's performance on The X Factor.

"He's certain he can turn her into a global star, but he just needs to iron out her visa problem. He's employed a firm of experts in Miami and is confident they will be able to reach some kind of arrangement."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Stunts cause Jackman family strife

PEOPLE Hugh Jackman is being held responsible for breaking his brother-in-law's leg, wrist and nose, femalefirst.co.uk is reporting.

The gossip website says the Australia actor's sister Sonya banned him from using her husband Richard as his stunt double after he broke so many bones on set.

Hugh, 40, said: "My brother-in-law has doubled for me in a few of my movies. It's a weird situation, though, because things can go wrong.

"One time on Van Helsing he was doubling for me in a scene where I got really thrown about. He ended up breaking his leg and I had to phone my sister to explain and say I was sending him home.

"He's cracked his wrist and nose, too. She's not best pleased."

Hugh recently described how gruelling his role as The Drover — an Australian version of a cowboy — was in outback drama Australia.

He said: "This is how they describe my character's horsemanship, The Drover, astride his horse like a knight in shining armour corralling 100 wild horses, by himself. That freaked me out."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

The Weather Network
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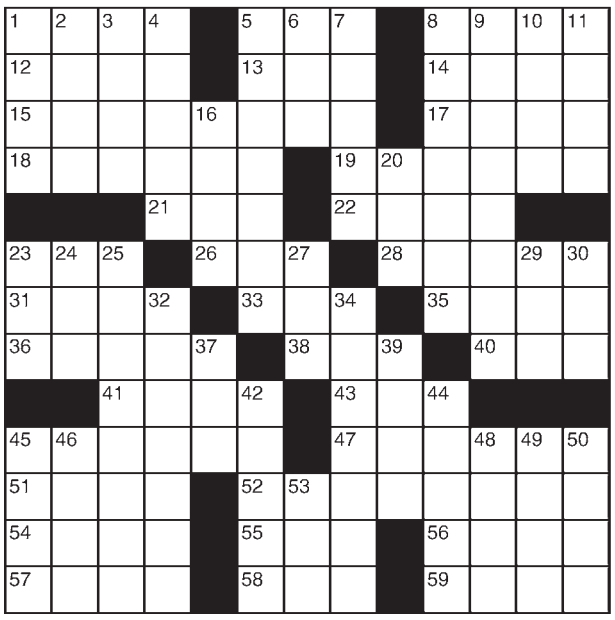
Today Rain and snow 2° / -5° 80%
Thursday Flurries -3° / -7° 60%
Friday Variable -3° / -6°
WeatherEye... Free App Available on iPhone.

Take Five

For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**



Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone — one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	7	9	6		8			2
	6	8						5
3			1					
8	3				6			
	2	4				6	5	
			4				1	7
					1			8
4						5	3	
2			3		5	7	9	

Crossword across

1 Basilica section
5 Chart
8 Pinnacle
12 Like some dorms
13 Lamb's dam
14 Gunky stuff
15 Trouble
17 Low-voiced woman
18 Seinfeld role
19 Skips a phoneme
21 Neither mate
22 Galvanization matter
23 Bonfire residue
26 Bottom line
28 "The Lord is my shepherd, ..." e.g.
31 Italy's silhouette
33 Party bowlful
35 Despot
36 Contestant's postcard
38 Glutton
40 Type squares
41 Sought restitution
43 Chic, to Austin Powers
45 Antiknock rating
47 Blood fluids
51 Avoid at all costs
52 Loss of courage
54 Took a powder
55 Citric beverage
56 Unravel
57 Dispatches, mob-style
58 "Of course"
59 Harvard rival

Crossword down

1 Rue the run
2 Motel amenity
3 — good example
4 Buzz Aldrin's real name
5 Preprinted, as postage
6 Shock partner
7 Actress Rosie
8 Opposing
9 Unsolved mystery
10 Speck
11 Grand verse
16 Unsigned (Abbr.)
20 Back talk
23 $5 portrait
24 Bart, to Homer
25 Something exceptionally good
27 Gratuity
29 Felon's flight
30 — Doubtfire
32 Those favoring a classless society?
34 Zits
37 Longing
39 Prospector's hope
42 Rot
44 Cartoon duck
45 Scandinavian city
46 Swedish Muppet
48 Antitoxins
49 Repast
50 Eyelid woe
53 Rhyming tribute

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

M	O	T	H	■	S	P	A	■	R	A	Y	S		
A	C	R	E	■	P	A	S	■	O	G	E	E		
S	H	A	M	R	O	C	K	■	C	U	T	E		
T	O	Y	■	I	R	E	■	S	K	E	I	N		
■	■	■	C	O	T	■	W	I	N	■	■	■		
L	I	G	H	T	■	B	O	R	R	O	W	S		
A	V	E	R	■	Y	A	K	■	O	B	O	E		
D	E	N	I	Z	E	N	■	F	L	I	N	T		
■	■	■	S	A	W	■	N	I	L	■	■	■		
S	H	A	R	P	■	C	A	N	■	Y	E	S		
N	O	L	O	■	R	O	C	K	W	E	L	L		
O	P	E	C	■	C	A	R	■	A	L	S	O		
W	E	E	K	■	A	L	E	■	G	L	E	E		

6	5	7	3	2	9	8	4	1
3	9	4	1	6	8	7	5	2
1	8	2	5	4	7	3	9	6
4	2	8	9	1	6	5	3	7
9	7	1	2	3	5	4	6	8
5	3	6	8	7	4	2	1	9
7	6	5	4	8	1	9	2	3
2	1	9	7	5	3	6	8	4
8	4	3	6	9	2	1	7	5

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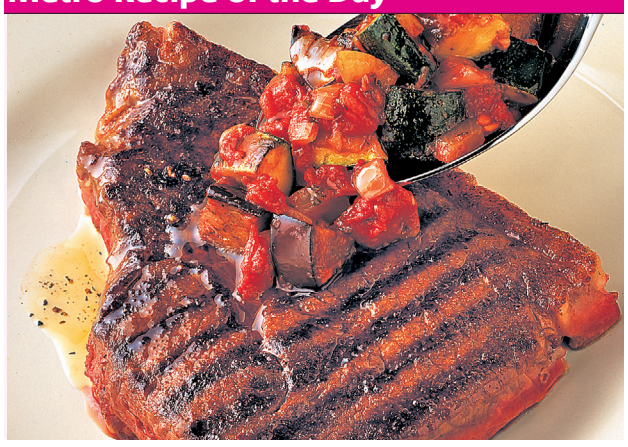
SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day



Spiced steak with speedy ratatouille

INGREDIENTS:
4 tbsp (60 ml) olive oil
3 shallots
2 cloves garlic
1 lb (500 g) zucchini
2/3 lb (300 g) baby, or small, eggplants
1/2 tsp (2 ml) dried thyme
1/2 tsp (2 ml) dried oregano
4 tbsp (60 ml) red wine
1 can (19 oz/540 ml) chopped tomatoes
2 tbsp (25 ml) tomato paste
Salt
1 tsp (5 ml) ground coriander
1 tsp (5 ml) ground cumin
1 tsp (5 ml) ground paprika
1/2 tsp (2 ml) cayenne pepper
4 sirloin or rump steaks, about 6 oz (170 g) each

METHOD:
1. Heat 2 tbsp (25 ml) oil in large saucepan. Peel and chop shallots and garlic, add to the pan, and cook over a moderate heat for 3-4 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, rinse, dry, and trim zucchinis and eggplants and cut into 1/2 in. (1 cm) chunks. Stir into shallots with thyme and oregano, and cook gently for 5 minutes.
3. Add wine, tomatoes and juice, tomato paste and a little salt, then cover and simmer gently for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until vegetables have softened.
4. While ratatouille is cooking, put spices into small bowl, add pinch of salt, and mix together. Season steaks on both sides with spice mixture.
5. Heat remaining olive oil in heavy-based frying pan until faint haze rises, then fry steaks for 4-4 1/2 minutes per side for rare steak, 5 1/2–6 for medium-rare or 6–8 1/2 for well done, depending on meat's thickness. Serve with ratatouille.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Worrying interrupts your work time. You have to please a VIP. A dim-witted man will jump to conclusions.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
A superbly cynical person will fail. Call someone to express your respect. Going through a crisis is exasperating.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Make a good deal with a tough call. It's time to face the truth about indecision. Don't be confrontational with the wrong person.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A simple error creates chaos. Stop chasing an impossible dream. Angry people will be astounded by a strange person.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
You can influence the public. Don't defeat yourself by being naive. A misplaced shoe will waste time.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
You'll appreciate what an older person says. A phobia can be fixed by a professional. You'll make a discovery when everybody talks at once.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Your positive attitude will lift everyone's spirits. A stubborn person will support you. Don't lose your temper due to a quarrel.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A guilty person avoids punishment again. An unemployed person is shaken by bureaucracy. An informer will come to your rescue.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
An important man is being nagged. An upset friend will make a truce. A complicated argument will make you laugh.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
You might escape from a passionate fascination. A business problem will develop later on. A charismatic person is oblivious to everyone.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Avoid causing resentment in a family. A significant event will be mystifying. Make a decision about a troublemaker.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A committed shopper finds a remarkable bargain. Reassure a fearful person. You can enjoy a fated encounter.

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This day in history

JAN. 7, 1610: Galileo Galilei observes the four largest moons of Jupiter for the first time. He named them and in turn the four are called the Galilean moons.
JAN. 7, 1953: President Harry Truman announces that the United States has developed the hydrogen bomb.
JAN. 7, 1959: The United States recognizes the new Cuban government of Fidel Castro.
JAN. 7, 1991: Beginning of the operation Desert Storm, during the Gulf War.
JAN. 7, 199: The impeachment of President Bill Clinton begins.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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CASH PURCHASE PRICE

Rio EX model shown

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NHTSA - Frontal impacts††

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CITY: 10.6 L/100KM 27 MPG

EX model shown

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CASH PURCHASE PRICE

+ **CASH REBATE**

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NHTSA - Frontal and side impacts††

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CITY: 10.3 L/100KM 27 MPG

LX model shown

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◆Cash purchase price for 2009 Rio EX MT (RO5429)/2009 Rondo LX AT (RN7519)/2009 Sportage LX MT (SP5519) is $9,995/$16,995/$16,995 and includes a cash rebate of $3,600/$3,000/$4,700 based on an MSRP of $13,595/$19,995/$21,695. Delivery and destination fees of $1,455/$1,650/$1,650 excluded. License, registration, insurance, dealer administration fees and taxes are excluded. Other lease and finance options also available. Dealers are free to set individual prices. Prices subject to change without notice. Certain restrictions may apply. §Get an instant cash rebate* on select 2009 models. Offer varies by vehicle and purchasing method (lease, cash purchase or finance). See your local participating Kia dealership for full details. ❖0% purchase financing available on all 2009 models for a term of up to 36 months on approved credit (O.A.C.). Term varies by model. >Highway/city fuel consumption for 2009 Rio EX MT is 5.9 L (48 MPG)/7.3 L (39 MPG); 2009 Rondo LX is 7.5L (38 MPG)/10.6L (27 MPG); 2009 Sportage LX MT is 7.8 L (36 MPG)/10.3 L (27 MPG) per 100km. The actual fuel consumption of these vehicles may vary. These estimates are based on the Government of Canada's approved criteria and testing methods. Refer to the Government of Canada publication EnerGuide Fuel Consumption Guide. ‡Green Score for Kia Rio/Rondo based on manual/automatic transmission specification within their segment. Refer to GreenerCars.org for full details. ††NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) test results. Visit www.safercar.gov for full details. ^Conditions apply to the $500 Grad Rebate program, see dealer for details. ✣Late availability on Bluetooth hands-free option. ▼Kia's "Worry-Free Comprehensive" warranty covers most vehicle components against defects occurring under normal use and maintenance conditions. Bluetooth technology and SIRIUS® Satellite Radio available on select 2009 models. © 2008 SIRIUS Canada Inc. See dealer for details. Price, availability and specifications are subject to changes without notice. Some vehicles advertised may include optional accessories or after-sale equipment and may not be exactly as shown. Information in this advertisement is believed to be accurate at the time of print. Offer ends February 2, 2009 and is valid for residents of Ontario/Manitoba only. KIA is a trademark of Kia Motors Corporation.